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# Contact

Sharing ESL Strategies

*Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of English as a Second Language of Ontario*

## What are ESL/ELD? What happened to ESD?

ESL stands for English as a Second Language. ELD stands for English Literacy Development, which has replaced ESD (English Skills Development).

ESL and ELD are instructional programs for students who arrive in Toronto schools as learners of Standard Canadian English, whether they have recently come from other countries, or were born in Canada and raised in homes where Standard Canadian English is not the primary means of communication.

ESL and ELD students may be grouped together for instructional purposes, but the expectations, the resources and the instructional approaches may differ. The two programs can be distinguished as follows:

### English as a Second Language (ESL)

The ESL program provides instruction in the language of the school for students whose first language is not English. Most ESL students are at or near age-appropriate levels of linguistic and cognitive development in their own languages. They have probably not missed much schooling, if any, and would probably be able to achieve success in the Ontario Curriculum at their age-appropriate grade level if it were offered in their own language and took into account their cultural background knowledge.

### ESL Students

- Students who have arrived in Canada with little or no knowledge of English will need intensive ESL support.
- Students who have studied English in their own countries may need some ESL support in order to catch up to their age peers in all aspects of English language skills.
- Children born in Canada and whose first major exposure to English is at school may need support in learning English for the first few years of schooling.

*(cont'd on page 3)*

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ESL Strategies for teachers of other subjects

A Learner's Story: If we want light, we must conquer darkness

Project-based ESL instruction: A study

Language Profile: Hungarian

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***Contact*** welcomes copy of general interest to association members, including announcements, reports, articles, calls for papers and news items. Contributors should include their full name, title and affiliation. Copy should be preferably e-mailed to the Editor at office@teslontario.org in Windows '97 Rich Text format, or typed double-spaced to the Editor c/o The TESL Association of Ontario, 27 Carlton Street, Ste. 405, Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1L2, (416) 593-4243, Fax (416) 593-0164. Deadlines are January 30, March 30 and June 30.

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# From the Editor

Greetings everyone. We hope that you all are well rested from the summer and ready to get back in the classroom.

We have decided to call this Back to School issue, "Sharing ESL Strategies" because it includes practical pointers and techniques that can be shared with your colleagues who are not necessarily ESL teachers, but who, due to cutbacks, find more and more ESL learners in their mainstream subject classrooms.

Although these tips may be obvious to seasoned ESL instructors, it doesn't hurt to be reminded from time to time. We thank Eleanor Cooper, who teaches Additional Qualifications courses at the University of Toronto and York University, for these useful submissions.

In this issue, Elizabeth Coelho defines some terms related to ESL teaching, and Linda Steinman remembers the first ESL class she ever taught. In addition, Lydia Froio shares techniques for using songs in any ESL classroom.

Also in this issue, Cathy Haghighat profiles Hungarian, and Ruby Macksoud shows us how project-based lessons helped her class.

Learner Rowena Xiaoqing He has written a story about her experiences as an immigrant, and ESL instructor and writer Judy Pollard Smith recalls the trials and tribulations faced by one of our country's first female authors and immigrants, Susanna Moodie. Use them with your learners to discuss common experiences of immigrants throughout the ages.

As always, this September issue features our Board of Directors for the coming year, as well as financial and membership reports, and the program for this year's November conference. Conference presenters: please remember to submit copies of your presentations to the TESL office (see masthead alongside Table of Contents for details of submission) for publication in our June 2002 Conference Proceedings Issue.

Brigid Kelso
*Contact* Editor

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Conference presenters: please remember to submit copies of your presentations to the TESL office for publication in our June 2002 Conference Proceedings Issue.

*(cont'd from page 1)*

- Some students from the English-speaking Caribbean who speak Caribbean English Creole as their home language may also benefit from ESL support for orientation to their new cultural and educational environment, and for assistance with some features of Standard Canadian English.

### The ESL Program

- ESL support is provided at the home school; an additional staff allocation for ESL/ELD assists schools to provide the necessary support.
- All teachers are expected to adapt their programs in order to meet the needs of ESL students in their classes.
- The ESL/ELD teacher provides direct support to students and also acts as a resource to other teachers in adapting their programs to meet the needs of ESL learners in their classrooms.
- At the secondary level, students may take ESL credit courses instead of English courses. As well, schools may offer special ESL sections of courses in other subjects.

### English Literacy Development (ELD)
### ELD or ESD?

The ELD program is still known as English Skills Development (ESD) in elementary schools (JK-Grade 8), pending publication of a new Ministry resource document for ESL and ELD in the elementary grades.

The ELD program is an intensive literacy development program for students who have recently arrived in Canada and who have missed much schooling in their own countries. Some students have not had access to schooling because of civil war in their country of origin. Others have had limited to access to schooling for geographic and socio-economic reasons.

Such students have had very limited opportunities to develop literacy or academic skills in any language, and could not reasonably be expected to achieve the expectations of the Ontario Curriculum at their age-appropriate grade level even if it were offered in their own language. These students need an intensive academic upgrading program with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, as well as assistance with learning English.

Students from non-English-speaking countries who have received little or no schooling prior to their arrival in Canada may have very limited literacy development in their first langage.

## ELD Students

- Students from non-English-speaking countries who have received little or no schooling prior to their arrival in Canada may have very limited literacy development in their first langage. These students need intensive ELD instruction in order to begin literacy instruction in English.
- Some students from the English-speaking Caribbean may have had limited opportunities for schooling and would benefit from intensive ELD instruction in order to develop the literacy skills required for success at school.

## The ELD Program

- ELD support is usually provided at the home school; an additional staff allocation for ESL/ELD assists schools to provide the necessary support.
- All teachers are expected to adapt their programs in order to meet the needs of ELD students in their classes.
- The ESL/ELD teacher provides direct support to students and also acts as a resource to other teachers in adapting their programs to meet the needs of ELD learners in their classrooms.
- Some students also receive assistance from bilingual tutors for a limited period after arrival in Canada.
- Students in Grades 6-9 who have arrived in Canada within the previous 3 years may be admitted to special congregated programs in designated schools. These programs, called LEAP and ESL-Up, have limited enrolment and are co-ordinated by central ESL/ELD resource staff. Students need some oral proficiency in English in order to benefit from literacy instruction in English. Beginning learners of English may benefit from initial placement in an ESL program in order to develop an adequate level of oral proficiency.

*Elizabeth Coelho was the former coordinator of ESL/ELD for the Toronto District School Board. She now is with the Faculty of Education at OISE/U of T.*

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# Strategies for Teaching ESL Students: tips for inexperienced and reminders for experienced ESL teachers

*The following strategies for teaching ESL/ELD students were provided by Eleanor Cooper to her colleagues when she was a consultant for the Scarborough Board of Education.*

## Directions in ESL/ELD

### 1. Cognitive Academic Learning Approach

- emphasis on academic English rather than communicative competency, e.g., readings from Science, Social Sciences, etc.
- teach and model learning strategies so students become active learners and think about how they learn and monitor learning (metacognition)
- activate prior knowledge
- reading/writing for different purposes

### 2. Authentic Communication

- language is learned most successfully when learners are immersed in authentic/meaningful communication, e.g., problem solving situations

### 3. Validate Students' Culture and Language

- encourage students to read in L1, e.g., Internet, international newspapers
- school library – display international literature and community news in other languages
- invite parents to share knowledge (students can translate if necessary)

### 4. Learning Styles

- make students aware of their learning styles (inventories)
- use teaching and evaluation strategies for all styles not just teacher's preferred style
- teach students how and why they need to change style for certain tasks, e.g., vocabulary analytic ➔ holistic

### 5. Use Strengths in L1 to Bridge to L2

- get to know how students learned in L1, e.g., oral reading, memorization
- show how these strategies are useful, e.g., grammar (memorize rules)

### 6. Guided Reading/Writing Approach

- teacher models and provides support
- students move from dependent ➔ independent
- teacher guides by asking questions and giving frequent feedback

### 7. Critical Literacy Approach

- step by step approach to move students from concrete level to abstract and encourage students to give opinions, analyse, evaluate and solve problems
- four phases:
  1. descriptive – what text says
  2. personal – relate to own experience and give opinions
  3. analytic – compare/contrast to own experience
  4. creative/problem solving
- framework for reading, role plays, journals, etc.

### 8. Assessment/Evaluation

- use alternative methods, e.g, rubrics, portfolios (self-evaluation)
- give students choices to allow for different learning styles (e.g., oral – debate or essay)
- teach students strategies for different types of evaluation, e.g., CLOZE – divergent styles

Language is learned most successfully when learners are immersed in authentic/meaningful communication, e.g., problem solving situations.

Assessment gives students choices to allow for different learning styles (e.g., oral – debate or essay)

**9. Key Visuals**

- teach different types for different subjects, e.g.: flow chart → History, Science
- teach students purposes – summarizing, studying, project, essays

**10. Co-operative Learning**

- students become active learners
- jigsaw – learn by teaching others
- good for multi level classes
- authentic language use

# Strategies to Help ESL Students in Regular Classes

Use several ways to reinforce a lesson, e.g., visually through videos, overheads, key visuals, handouts and blackboard. Hearing the concepts is not enough.

1. Language develops in a functional and meaningful setting. Students need opportunities to connect concepts to their daily lives. Using themes, integrated learning (examining an issue from multiple perspectives) and letting students act out word problems are highly motivating.
2. Language development requires repeated exposure and many opportunities for practice. Use several ways to reinforce a lesson, e.g., visually through videos, overheads, key visuals, handouts and blackboard. Hearing the concepts is not enough.
3. Make linguistic adjustments. Break lesson into smaller units and pause or stress key words during oral teaching. Give several examples to illustrate the concept. Do some together and have students also do some with a partner. Check to see if students did understand.
4. Prepare students by giving an outline (on blackboard or overhead). Go over key vocabulary. Students could have a list the night before and look up the words in a bilingual dictionary. Often they already understand the concepts but the vocabulary is the problem.

Prepare students by giving an outline (on blackboard or overhead). Go over key vocabulary. Students could have a list the night before and look up the words in a bilingual dictionary.

5. Model good samples of work. Have other students read answers or show on overhead or post on bulletin board. After a major test or exam students need to have samples of correct answers. This could also be done in cooperative learning groups.
6. Language development has an affective base. Students need to be encouraged to ask questions and take risks. If the student answers incorrectly don't be negative; rather model the correct answer. Making mistakes is part of the learning process. Know when to wait for an answer and when to help the student express his/her answer more clearly.
7. Language development requires interaction. Build this into every lesson in some way, e.g., cooperative learning, pair work and conferencing with students. An English partner is an effective way to help students understand concepts and language. When assigning groups mix different language groups to promote English. At times students may benefit from using first language to explain concepts.
8. Build on students' experiences. Recognize that they come with rich experiences and knowledge. Find ways for them to share, e.g., projects, alternative approaches to problem solving, famous people or literature from their country.
9. Set high expectations but provide many resources to reinforce concepts. Don't water down concepts or accept careless, sloppy or late work.
10. Evaluate fairly using many methods. ESL students may need extra time to process information and express their ideas. You may need to modify certain tasks, e.g., allow oral responses at times or allow them to do an oral presentation to a smaller group.
11. ESL students need to experience concepts at different levels:
    a.) experiential – hands on, e.g., using manipulatives
    b) connecting – using other words or pictures, e.g., key visuals, games
    c) symbolic – think about concept So often teachers at higher grade levels only teach

the symbolic level and never check to see if students really understand concepts before they test. The first two methods also develop more language proficiency.

12. Teacher centred classrooms and traditional methods don't allow students to improve language proficiency or apply concepts in the real world. They may be able to correctly fill in worksheets in isolation or memorize information.

13. Keeping a language learning log or journal can be very beneficial since the student learns to reflect on his/her learning and be more actively involved. Students can ask questions to clarify information. The teacher also gets feedback to see if remediation is needed.

14. Language growth is a developmental process so assessment should reflect this. Formative assessment should be built into every program. Portfolios are an excellent way to show growth and they allow students to self assess and reflect on their learning so vital for improvement. Rubrics and the use of anchors or samples at different levels help students see what they need to do to improve.

Subjects like art and music are far more theoretical and require a higher level of English proficiency so may no longer be the best subjects to integrate stage 1 ESL learners.

# Mainstreaming of Education

Changes in Ministry of Education curriculum documents both at the elementary and secondary level have created additional challenges for integrating ESL students at the beginner stage of English proficiency. There is greater emphasis on theory and integrated learning and many more expectations to report on. Subjects like art and music are far more theoretical and require a higher level of English proficiency so may no longer be the best subjects to integrate stage 1 ESL learners. At the grade 9 level, Keyboarding is no longer a subject by itself. Mainstream teachers need strategies that are easy to implement and are also good for all learners. It is imperative that ESL teachers connect more with regular classroom teachers to provide additional support. Peer tutors and parent volunteers are also very valuable resources.

Here are some additional strategies for mainstream teachers (expanded from my previous article on mainstreaming):

- **Preview/review** – can do in small groups or in first language, with a peer tutor or volunteer or strong student in the class.
- **Speech modification** – slightly slower, fewer complex sentences, specific names rather than pronouns.
- When you use **idioms** explain the meaning, use synonyms, paraphrasing and summarizing to ensure ESL students have many opportunities to comprehend.
- **Think alouds** – explain how you arrive at conclusions and inferences (all the steps)
- **Alternative assessment** – adapt and increase demands as proficiency develops.
- **Vary groups** – heterogeneous and homogeneous
- **Language buddies** – can be same language or stronger student
- **Allow use of first language** – to explain concepts until English develops. Encourage parents to talk about concepts and help child understand (to encourage cognitive growth). Bilingual parent volunteers and peer tutors may also help student understand.

  How can ESL teachers, peer tutors and parent volunteers support learning in a withdrawal class?

- Provide **additional practice** with concepts or stories e.g., Readers' Theatre (same story but easier), role plays, manipulatives.
- **Check comprehension** and clarify through teacher conferencing, learning logs to identify difficulties, go over tests and redo, use key visuals.
- **Practise the language structures and text forms** needed for various subjects e.g., passive voice for science lab reports, clauses for history, narrative form

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- **Teach learning strategies**, e.g., t-charts for notetaking
- **Provide missing background knowledge** through field trips, videos, CD Roms, picture books, maps.
- **Develop key vocabulary** – word banks related to a topic, displays around the room, pictures, lots of different dictionaries.
- **Teach text structure** so students can access information in texts.

Waiting until their English is fluent can be disastrous for ESL students. It's like trying to keep up with a moving target. ESL students will never catch up to their peers if we deny them access to academic learning and concentrate on language.

# Integrating ESL Students

Should we set up reception centres and develop English proficiency before integrating students into other subjects? This may make sense to some educators but **research solidly proves that cognitive growth and mastery of content must continue while English is being learned.**

Waiting until their English is fluent can be disastrous for ESL students. It's like trying to keep up with a moving target. ESL students will never catch up to their peers if we deny them access to academic learning and concentrate on language. ESL educator Jim Cummins' research indicates that it takes 8-10 years for cognitive academic language proficiency not 5-7 as previously thought.

An article in *TESOL Journal*, summer 1996 "Collaborating with Content-Area Teachers. What we need to share" identifies **10 principles ESL educators need to address in helping ESL students acquire both language and academic proficiency**.

Academic language should be developed as a separate skill. Conversational fluency doesn't guarantee academic success.

1. Language and content go hand in hand. Students can't wait until they speak English fluently to be deemed "ready" for content instruction. ESL students often understand more than they can express.
2. Concept and language gaps require different approaches. A wrong word doesn't mean wrong concept.
3. Second language learning is developmental. Errors are good indicators of language development.
4. Content should not be compromised or diluted. Rather than simplify, modify and teach all students how to access text. Simplifying denies all students access to good language and limits opportunities for learning.
5. Linguistic adjustments make content accessible to students, e.g., breaking units into smaller parts, teacher pausing during speech, stressing key words in a sentence.
6. Strategic use of reading and writing activities are needed to support learning, e.g., in history content is derived mainly from listening and reading so approach instruction from other angles.
7. Grading should be fair to ESL students. Use multiple assessments. Some methods may be intimidating.
8. Affective factors influence learning. A safe environment, where risk taking is commended, is essential.
9. Academic language should be developed as a separate skill. Conversational fluency doesn't guarantee academic success.
10. Cross-disciplinary collaboration is essential. Roles need to be clarified. The subject teacher is the expert on content. The ESL teacher needs to give a rationales for recommending certain methods. There needs to be a balance between diplomacy and tenacity.

# Empowering ESL/ESD Students

Why do some ESL/ESD students adapt successfully to a new culture and others lose hope and become marginalized? Without English, immigrants feel powerless and impotent no matter what their previous education and confidence and often become frustrated and depressed. An article in the latest *TESOL Journal*, "Rethinking Empowerment: The Acquisition of Cultural, linguistic and Academic Knowledge" examines this issue and identifies several key **factors associated with successful integration**. It is vital that students feel positive in their social relationships within the class. Rather than focus on skills taught in isolation, teachers need to emphasize social contexts where students actively use and manipulate language in making sense of their world and creating meaning. This means connecting learning to their daily lives, helping them solve their own problems and linking learning to future goals.

Experiencing success is essential for developing a sense of competence, self-confidence, self-respect so they can ultimately become empowered. Without feeling successful in intellectual and social transactions, immigrants cannot develop the motivation to achieve or feel a sense of accomplishment and be capable of learning. **Schools must provide support, scaffolding, challenging programs and empower students by giving them opportunities to play a role in a functionally competent way under the mentorship of skilled persons.**

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How can we empower ESL/ELD students in our schools?

- Use older students as interpreters, peer tutors in L1
- Design projects where students in regular classes interview ESL/ELD students to tap into their experience of other countries, religions, etc.
- Train ESL/ELD students to welcome special visitors to the school.

# Reading in Multilingual Classrooms

Teachers face many challenges as they help ESL/ELD students learn to read in English. Although many students with high literacy skills in first language are able to transfer reading skills, there are some students who either don't have a solid foundation to build on or who use ineffective strategies. A book *Reading in Multilingual Classrooms* by Viv Edwards explores the process of learning to read in other cultures, how this impacts on their reading in English and offers many excellent strategies to help struggling readers.

It is important to realize that other cultures place a high value on literacy especially if there's a link between language and religion. Children may attend religious schools several evenings a week or Heritage language classes on Saturdays. Parents may not know how to help their children with reading at home. In many cultures, books were given to children after they learned how to read.

We need to check how our students learned to read, the specific strategies that were taught in their culture and the type of alphabet, in order to decide on the appropriate ways to help them improve reading in English. Muslim children memorize passages from the Koran, written in Arabic. Chinese students practise ideographs over and over until they're perfect. If they forget or misplace a single stroke, the meaning of the character is completely changed.

Detail and perfection are critical. Whereas we encourage approximations, inventive spelling and reward any attempts at literacy in the early stages. Students recite words in chorus after the teacher and learn through repetition and copying.

Students transfer the methods they learned and may focus too much on details – the individual words – rather than the meaning. They don't know how to predict using context clues. If their alphabet wasn't based on sound symbol correspondence, they may not have good phonemic awareness and may not hear distinct sounds. Perhaps their alphabet didn't have vowels or didn't have certain consonant sounds. Children with poor

Parents may not know how to help their children with reading at home. In many cultures, books were given to children after they learned how to read.

visual memory may have difficulty with the "look and say" method of decoding.

**Research demonstrates that a combination of methods is best** and phonics is more effective when reading begins to take off. Here are some strategies that are effective:

Choose books with lots of visual support, repetition or rhyme to help predict and remember.

- Teacher modelling and students participating. Teacher reads first, children join in and learn from participating.
- Language Experience. Children's own words become their reading material. Start with group story and then individual stories.
- Prediction. Read story aloud and ask students to predict. Ask students to retell story using picture prompts, cloze activities.
- Guided approach. Teacher gives clues – based on pictures, contexts, first letter, keep reading and come back, cover part of word, ask questions to connect to meaning.
- Prereading – connect to prior knowledge.
- Teach text structure – headings, subheadings, illustrations.
- Choose books with lots of visual support, repetition or rhyme to help predict and remember.
- Use wordless books. Students can tell story and develop understanding of sequence and climax.
- Caption books – picture dictionaries and alphabet books are great even for older students. They can create their own and share with others.
- Use folk tales since many students are familiar with these.
- Check oral reading to see which cuing systems the students are using – grapho-phonic, syntactic (grammar) or semantic. Does the student self-correct and read for meaning? How confident and fluent is the reading?
- Educate parents and make the school's expectations explicit. Involve parents at home by asking them to listen to their children read or by reading to them in first language.

# Improving Reading in the Content Areas

Knowing where the most important information is (titles, subtitles, first sentence of each paragraph, last paragraph) will help readers improve comprehension and note taking skills.

The Grade 10 Test of Reading and Writing has focused our attention on preparing students for the literary demands found in all classrooms. Reading strategies are not often taught explicitly, particularly at the secondary level, so students may apply ineffective strategies and work hard but not smart. A recent preconvention session I attended at TESOL, Vancouver "Strategies for Underprepared ESL Readers in Content Classrooms" by Kate Kinsella (from San Francisco University) recommended excellent strategies to help students understand informational texts and expository articles and move beyond narrative forms of writing.

- We need to expose students to more expository reading and make them aware that not all reading is fun or magical.
- We need to break the cycle of co-dependency and demand more of our students. Students need to practise reading independently and be assessed on this not just material covered in class by the teacher.
- We need to teach text structure such as the organizational patterns in informational texts, common transition words that signal certain kinds of information (for example, summation "thus, in brief, indeed, to conclude"), strategies for prereading a chapter and summarizing effectively. Students may think that the information in the margins is unimportant and not even bother reading it. Knowing where the most important information is (titles, subtitles, first sentence of each paragraph, last paragraph) will help readers improve comprehension and note taking skills.
- Students need to be told to "put on the brakes" when they read and stop and question when they don't understand something. Teachers need to model good questions and teach students how to politely ask for clarification or assistance.
- Teaching grammatical structures common in certain subjects will help students improve both reading and writing skills. For example,

passive voice is common in science. Subordinate clauses are found in many texts and students may not know which ideas are most important.

- Students need to see models of good and weak paragraphs, summaries and essays. They need to analyse the form and understand how their own writing compares. Using rubrics, self-evaluation and teacher conferencing will help them understand their weaknesses and show them how to improve.
- We need to teach students how to read strategically and set a clear purpose for reading. This involves specific strategies before, while and after reading. Students need to learn how to monitor and evaluate their comprehension. Teachers should survey their students' reading strategies and habits so they can help students abandon bad habits and become more active readers.
- Looking at a student's writing can predict reading difficulties. For example if the student is using only simple sentences, this may mean the student doesn't understand how different types of clauses work.

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## Critically Reading ESL Texts

Texts exert a powerful influence on what is taught and how it is taught. In the past ESL/ELD teachers have focused more on the grammar sequencing, vocabulary and methodology rather than the sociopolitical issues. Although textbooks have vastly improved over the years, incorporating authentic reading materials and realistic communication situations, they still do not address the real needs of most immigrants.

An article in *TESOL Journal*, summer 97, "Critically Reading an ESL Text," analysed a common text Intercom 2000 Series and concluded that **few immigrants can see themselves represented in texts**. The characters in the text do represent several minority groups; however, they are in two parent families, have good jobs and many opportunities such as holidays, live in attractive houses or apartments and face few problems. Their problems are simplistic and easily solved and work is optional, suggesting people can choose how much to work. Medical issues are trivialized and unrealistic. According to Freire, "By not acknowledging the political aspects of education and by separating the word from the world of students, we help sustain a set of institutional practices that serve those who are already members of the dominant class."

As teachers we need to help immigrants gain access to political and economic power, to broaden experiences, offer knowledge and discourse that will enable students to actively participate in transforming their lives. Our budgets don't allow us to discard texts that have limitations; however, we can choose what sections to use and point out to students that life in Canada is not mirrored in the texts. We can supplement texts with materials that will empower students and help them cope with problems. We also need to give feedback to publishers about the limitations in texts.

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# Transforming Myths about Second Language Acquisition

Myths are traditions passed down over time and serve the purpose of explaining or justifying particular behaviour. People believe and accept them without questioning; therefore, they can exert a powerful influence and shape decisions. An article "Transforming Deficit Myths about Learning, Language and Culture" by B. Flores, P. Cousin and E. Diaz in *Literacy Instruction for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students, International Reading Association* analyses the negative impact certain myths can have on newcomers in our schools. Labelling ESL students "at risk" or "special needs students" often results in a cycle of failure, low expectations, inadequate programs and high drop out rates. Educators need to examine their own cultural biases and practices and **replace deficit models with enrichment models which will empower ESL students and their parents and validate their culture and language**.

Let's examine several of these myths:

### *Myth 1*

Myth 1: ESL students arrive with deficiencies in language and culture and lack experiences; therefore they develop learning problems

*ESL students arrive with deficiencies in language and culture and lack experiences; therefore they develop learning problems. IQ tests prove this. Acculturation and learning English are essential for academic progress but maintaining first language is not.*

**Research** demonstrates that using the first language is an asset and that the best way to encourage academic and linguistic development is to connect to prior knowledge and build on it to more complex learning. ESL students have rich experiences to share and this is an asset to our more global outlook in education.

### *Myth 2*

Myth 2: ESL students should be totally separated from the regular class and taught in isolation until they understand English.

*ESL students should be totally separated from the regular class and taught in isolation until they understand English.*

**Research** solidly proves even beginner ESL students need some exposure to more proficient speakers of English. An integrated curriculum is more beneficial than a fragmented one that focus on skills in isolation. Some withdrawal is needed to develop vocabulary and language skills; however, this should be connected to grade expectations in the other content areas.

### *Myth 3*

*Parents of ESL students don't care about their children's progress and can't really help them learn at home.*

**Research** has demonstrated that when schools connect to parents and make them true partners, results do improve significantly. Parents are very concerned but may be reluctant to get involved because they see this as interference with the teachers' roles and they may be embarrassed by their limited English. They think their role is to support the school by disciplining their children at home.

Staff development is vital in order to correct misconceptions and change practices. Techniques that work include:

- Coaching and mentoring or demonstrating how to help students improve
- Small study groups which read research and change practices
- Staff meetings supported by the principal, which address concerns, make real changes in programs, e.g., setting up reading buddies, bringing in interpreters to connect to parents
- Monitoring progress and using authentic assessment like portfolios
- Making parents real partners in learning (e.g., helping in tutoring programs and encouraging them to read to their children at home)

As Mary Ashworth (Canadian researcher and strong advocate for ESL) recently stated, "We must ensure that no children suffer from linguistic abuse and that they leave school more than they were."

# Questions to Enhance Learning

"Asking the right questions can go a long way toward helping teachers and students learn from one another."

This quote from an article in an issue of *Educational Leadership* has important implications for ESL/ELD students since many come from educational systems which do not encourage asking questions. Questions are often viewed as revealing ignorance or challenging the teachers.

Some benefits of students' questioning are:

- developing higher level thinking skills
- stimulating curiosity
- helping students to consider new possibilities, make connections and discover patterns
- activating prior knowledge
- improving memory

Teachers in ESL/ELD classrooms as well as mainstreamed classrooms need to:

- encourage students to ask more questions (reward them for doing so)
- directly teach and model the type of questions, particularly higher level thinking
- post a variety of questioning formats
- start research projects and book reports with questions (to reduce plagiarizing)
- encourage students to evaluate their questions in groups (which ones are more stimulating and result in greater learning?)
- use questions in a variety of contexts, e.g., response journals, games, before lessons
- assess questions rather than only answers

Encourage students to ask more questions (reward them for doing so).

# Developing Reflection in ESL/ELD Learners

The Ministry of Education assessment/evaluation policy and provincial report card require all students to reflect on their progress, self-evaluate and set goals so they can improve their learning. This can be challenging for ESL/ELD learners not only because they may not have sufficient vocabulary yet to express their ides, but because they see assessment/evaluation as the teacher's role and may not value it. Teachers need to help their students understand why reflection is important and integrate reflective analysis into their classroom in many ways, rather than just for portfolio assessment. Reflection needs to be made visible and done collaboratively as well as in isolation.

Here are some ways to develop reflection self and peer evaluation:

- Teachers can model reflection and build it into daily lessons. "Think alouds" (oral sharing of thought processes during reading and writing activities) help make reflection transparent.
- On writing assignments, ask students to reflect on themselves as writers. What was challenging? What did they improve in? What would they like to improve or change and why? What did they like best/least? Students can write short descriptions on the top of writing assignments which reveal their thoughts about the writing – "hard, like, promise (worth revising)."
- In the classroom ask students to describe themselves as writers and share with others how they got their ideas, how they solved problems, how they changed as writers. By making reflection public and interactive, teachers will learn more about how their students are thinking and can then plan appropriate lessons to help them improve.
- Learning logs help students reflect on their learning by sharing observations and feelings. They can also ask questions and dialogue with the teacher or other students.
- Portfolio assignments encourage reflection. You can use prompts to help students reflect on their work and explain their choices. For example:

On writing assignments, ask students to reflect on themselves as writers. What was challenging? What did they improve in? What would they like to improve or change and why? What did they like best/least?

I have chosen this piece of work because ...

What I learned ...

I wonder why ...

I didn't understand ...

- Rubrics and exemplars help students self and peer evaluate. By comparing their work with samples for the different levels of performance on the rubric, students can see what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers can encourage students to be co-researchers in the classroom and evaluate what's effective in terms of helping them improve skills. You can discuss why you do certain activities or lessons. When students have a say they are more motivated. They can point out to their peers how the class has progressed. For example, for oral presentations, invite the class to give both a positive comment and an area for growth after their peers present. This helps all students understand how they're evaluated and so they can improve their skills.
- Teachers can share with the class how famous writers struggle with the writing process and how they reflect and grow as writers.
- Students can be graded on how well they use reflection in a variety of tasks: revising writing, engaging in reflective analysis in the class, portfolios etc. This will ensure they value it.

You can discuss why you do certain activities or lessons. When students have a say they are more motivated.

# Fostering Cultural Community

Canadian headlines about the dispute over Native fishing rights in the Maritimes demonstrate that although we may be perceived by the world to be a tolerant multicultural society, there are still some major internal misunderstandings regarding cultural values.

## Why develop cultural community?

- to empower students to deal with conflicts
- to develop respect for others
- to reduce stereotyping, racism
- to help students learn about themselves so they can clarify, defend and question their own values, opinions and behaviour
- to help students integrate successfully
- to help students develop critical thinking
- to encourage a global perspective useful for future jobs.

Foster empathy before judging. Discuss students' stereotypes of Canadians and why they formed these. Examine how stereotypes are formed.

## How to develop cultural community?

1. Build an atmosphere of mutual trust where students are encouraged to question, share and test assumptions about other cultures.
2. Provide opportunities for cultural sharing so they can learn about each others/cultures and break stereotypes previously held.
3. Acknowledge cultural variations and demonstrate how this enriches our world.
4. Teach students to suspend judgments and tolerate ambiguity. Discuss various opinions about a situation so students learn to keep an open mind before forming an opinion.
5. Foster empathy before judging. Discuss students' stereotypes of Canadians and why they formed these. Examine how stereotypes are formed.
6. Use cooperative learning strategies to show how we can solve problems better together.
7. Encourage reflection about students' own cultures, about Canada, the differences, why they've learned about other cultures and what they'd like to learn.
8. Assign topics which encourage different world views about issues, for example, alternative medicine.
9. Encourage students to interview each other to learn more about other cultures.
10. Make students aware that they share common goals – improving English, graduating, becoming a Canadian citizen.
11. Compare issues in the media from various points of view. Debate or role play all sides of the issue.

By building cultural community into our curriculum systematically we can help students develop the social skills needed for living harmoniously in a culturally diverse society as well as preparing them to compete successfully in a global world.

# Innovative Strategies to Bridge Cultures

Teachers who try to understand students' cultural values and use classroom strategies that honour both home and school empower students to achieve higher results as well as help them acculturate more successfully. A recent issue of the principal's publication, *Educational Leadership,* (April 99), presents many excellent examples of programs that view ESL as enrichment rather than remediation. Parents are welcomed as legitimate partners in education and an effort is made to bridge the two cultures.

Here are some ways you can begin to bridge cultures in your classroom:

## Curriculum strategies

Bilingual models such as "accelerated schooling" common in southern U.S. (Spanish and English) demonstrate that it is vital to use content to teach language and not water down the curriculum. Cognitive growth continues as students move from one language to the other. Teachers build on what students already know. Although we can not always create bilingual models due to the many diverse languages in our classrooms we can incorporate many of the same strategies:

- Allow the use of first language so students can help one another understand concepts.
- Use more "hands on" learning – experiments, manipulatives, field trips.
- Use cooperative learning – same language groups and mixed ability groups
- Encourage students to share their cultural background, ways they learned to solve math problems, literature, folktales, etc.
- Use more content ESL and connect to subject grade expectations
- Hire more bilingual teachers
- Develop strong mainstream classes where ESL students aren't ignored but rather are given "adapted" lessons, material and evaluation, so they keep up cognitively. Withdrawal classes are still vital for students at the beginner levels of language proficiency.
- Involve parents and community as resources

## Bridging Values

Teachers need to understand the value systems of their students to reduce cultural conflicts. Our schools foster individualism and independence, whereas many cultures value collectivism, interdependence of family members, helping the groups become successful. ESL students may end up feeling confused and feel their culture is inferior. Here are some ways teachers can build on collectivism:

- Use choral reading where proficient students help the less proficient English learners.
- Celebrate group success rather than just individual success
- Assign classroom tasks as a group and encourage students to help one another rather than individual responsibilities
- Use cooperative learning strategies such as literature circles help the whole group understand novels more
- Use games which depend on group's cooperative rather than individual competition
- Encourage sharing of stories, myths, heroes which value collectivism
- Help students set up study groups for exams.

## Parent Teacher Conferences/Workshops

Parents may not share the same values and as a result not understand teachers' compliments. A teacher may think he/she is praising a child by saying he/she is "outstanding," but the parents may view this as negative (standing alone and not helping the group). Teachers need to realize that parents do value education but may have different goals and different views of what positive character development is. Individual potential may not be as highly valued. Here are some ways to build bridges in the interview process:

Start with a group conference of parents of the same language rather than a child led conference since this violates the collectivistic cultural value

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in which children respect and look up to authority figures. A translator can help you get across vital information about the report card, expectations, homework, etc.

Parents can ask questions and help each other understand the system. Then let the child show his/her portfolio and other work, and tour the classroom. Parents can have a private conference later if necessary.

Other ways to help parents understand our system are:

- Offer family workshops with interpreters to train parents to help with homework.
- Set up informal drop in centres for parents.
- Invite parents to help in the classroom.
- Set up tutoring programs in first language (university students can help).
- Ask parents to help set up resources in other languages in the library.

We can learn from these models and move from a system that marginalizes and denies access to immigrant students to one that truly values diversity and empowers students.

By understanding how other cultures perceive disabilities and Special Education, we can improve our communication with parents so that ESL/ELD students have access to the programs they need.

## Cultural Differences re Disabilities and Special Education

**By understanding how other cultures perceive disabilities and Special Education, we can improve our communication with parents so that ESL/ELD students have access to the programs they need.** This is a very sensitive area for many reasons. Parents may misinterpret educators' good intentions and suspect that this is a way of segregating minorities and limiting their opportunities and actually refuse psychological testing and the Special Education designation. Psychological tests may be problematic since it's often difficult to determine whether a problem is due to limited language proficiency, cultural differences, lack of education, poor quality of instruction or a learning disability. Many Boards do not consider ESL students for Special Education placement until they have been here for 1-2 years.

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The *TESOL Journal*, Autumn 98 issue's, "Cultural Differences in Conceptions of Disability: Central America and the Caribbean" discusses how disabilities and Special Education are perceived in these cultures and the implications for educators in North America. After sharing the highlights of this article with several community liaison counsellors, it would appear that the conclusions are representative of many other cultures.

**Many cultures are only concerned with severe disabilities and mainly physical impairments.** People with disabilities may be regarded with fear and viewed as helpless, social misfits and even hidden. Religious beliefs may result in families looking to supernatural explanations rather than medical ones. In many cultures parents protect the child more and are mainly concerned about his/her happiness, whereas in North America independence is valued more and individuals are encouraged to eventually work and live away from home. Parents may interpret labels as a message that their child is crazy, lazy or misbehaved.

**Mild disabilities are handled quite differently in other cultures.** Provisions include extra tutoring, having students repeat grades or grouping in a class for slow learners. Children who do not excel academically are not usually considered disabled if they can behave according to social norms. Teachers aren't trained to adapt programs or individualize instruction. Educators must not assume all immigrant children who have repeated grades are slower or have disabilities. **There are many reasons why children repeat grades.** They may have missed school because they had to help at home or with the harvest. Many couldn't afford the fees for uniforms, books, supplies and buses. Limited spending on education may have resulted in poorly trained teachers, enormous multilevel classes, little assessment, no texts or supplies, and/or poor discipline.

**Recommendations**

- Consider cultural factors when determining whether students should be referred for Special Education placement. Use informal assessment before referral and try intervention measures first. A flow chart of steps to take first is helpful. Use your in-school support team to collaborate regarding appropriate strategies. Call in Board ESL and Special Education consultants for additional support. Sometimes a referral is needed within the first two years.
- Psychological tests may not be reliable or valid for recent immigrants since they may not have sufficient language to fully understand and cultural bias may limit performance. Even if tests are translated they aren't valid because they were normed on a different population.
- Recruit parents and community members from various cultures to improve communication and develop cultural sensitivity.
- Develop direct personal relationships with parents over the long term. Use translators and/or community liaison counsellors to address differences in cultural perceptions of disabilities.
- Invite parents to school and share what you are doing and why, so they can reinforce learning at home.

**Some students may need the services from both Special Education and ESL teachers until their language is adequately developed.**

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## *NEWS*

### TESL Ontario Updates its Website

- ESL Ontario is pleased to offer the option of buying or renewing your membership online.
- Career ads and publishers' ads may also be purchased online.
- All credit card transactions are safe and secure – processed by Internet Secure.

Please visit the Membership section or Job Board section to take advantage of these options.

# If we want light, we must conquer darkness

## 1. Exile from the Paradise

Before I was given birth, my parents had to leave the city where they grew up, and start working in the northern mountain areas after university graduation. During the Cultural Revolution, the Communist Party promoted the slogan that it was better to be Red than expert. Workers and farmers with little or no education were considered more fit to run the country than members of the educated class. Jobs were assigned by the government and often did not correspond to an individual's skills. Mother was assigned to work in a factory, which was packed with graduates from universities around the country; Father was sent to work in another remote village hospital with the "bare-foot doctors", the kind of doctor who had only primary school education. Father could not come home every night and Mother lived alone in the small assigned room, which was next to a prison. Once a prisoner escaped without being noticed and tried to break into Mother's room. Mother was scared to death. She was somehow rescued by her neighbour, but she told me she always felt scared to be alone in darkness since then.

During the Cultural Revolution, the Communist Party promoted the slogan that it was better to be Red than expert.

Later Mother was pregnant and she felt tired and could not perform as usual in the factory. She then received frequent criticism for "being lazy" and "did not work hard to build the communist cause". Mother was told to kneel down in public to admit her mistakes and make apologies. It was humiliating but Mother was not the only one who had to do that. She told me later in her life, "When you are struggling in darkness to survive, spirit, dignity and dreams become luxuries."

## 2. The dark night gives me dark eyes, I am going to use them to seek light.

After I was born, Father gave me the name "Xiaoqing", which means "clear dawn" in English, expressing the generation's longing for light and justice. Mother became very ill, probably resulting from a lack of nutrition and overwork. She was operated on several times in the hospital. Father had to work and take care of Mother at the same time. I was left under the care of my parents' friends. Unfortunately, I was not a popular girl since I kept crying all the time. Mother explained to me when I grew up: "I think you were hungry. I had no mother-milk to feed you. And we had no money to buy milk or milk powder. We later somehow managed to get some milk powder and mix it with other stuff to feed you, but then you had a stomach ache all the time. It was so hard to raise you."

There was no heat, no hot water. San Gupo did not wash me everyday because of the cold. "You kept crying and crying and nobody understood until one day we found out: Your right upper leg was all rotten because the string for the diaper was too tight and it went deep into your flesh.

Father's aunt, San Gupo offered to help take care of me. San Gupo was the younger sister of my grandfather. Her husband died 20 days after their marriage and she never got married again. According to the Confucian moral code, a woman should remain chaste and faithful to her husband, even after his death. San Gupo was a very kind and warm-hearted woman. She stayed in the same dark and shabby room, where she first lived with her husband, for her whole life. After we left the mountain area, we invited San Gupo to stay with us, but she insisted that she did not want to leave her home. I could not understand then, and I don't understand even now. She looked so lonely and miserable in that small room. People in today's society may never understand how a 20-day's memory can sustain a woman being alone for the rest of her life. Maybe that room was San Gupo's root. She felt she belonged to that room. Any type of spiritual force, whether we agree with it or not, can be strong enough to move mountains.

It was very cold in the mountain area – there was no heat, no hot water. San Gupo did not wash me everyday because of the cold. "You kept crying and crying and nobody understood until one day we found out: Your right upper leg was all rotten because the string for the diaper was too tight and it went deep into your flesh. We felt so sorry for you. Father and I suddenly felt so helpless and sad. We weren't sure if we could bring you up." Mother told me this many times in my later life. The scar is still there on my right upper leg. I know it will stay there, like all the bitterness and hardship carved in my memory; and it is never, ever, gone with the wind.

Father and Mother decided to send me back to the city, to live with my grandmother, who was then working in a sewing workshop to support the family. I was too little to be sentimental about the separation, but Mother told me that my crying shook the whole world when I was taken from her arm and put on the train. For the first time in my life, I left my parents and headed for a place which was so strange and uncertain to me.

Since grandmother had to work, I was soon sent

to the Tuo Er Suo, the day-care center of the neighborhood. The so-called center was actually a room, a dark and cold room packed with kids. The teacher told my grandmother that I was a terribly quiet girl: I sat next to the door without a word or a motion for the whole day. I always begged Grandmother not to send me to the Tuo Er Suo. Sometimes Grandmother agreed and let me stay home by myself. I was alone and felt lonely. I hated the darkness surrounding me. I did not turn on the light, as Grandmother told me many times that we could not afford to pay the electricity. Once again I sat next to the door, waiting for Grandmother to come home. I rarely talked. Grandmother started to worry that I was a dumb girl because mother suffered too much when she was bearing me. Grandmother kept saying I was a poor girl. "I am not sure if I am poor or not. I want to be next to the door, waiting for sunset, waiting for grandmother. I miss Papa and Mama. I do not know where they are; why they do not come to see me. I know they love me, but they left me, in that dark cold room. I am scared. I want to see light. I want light."

On a cold winter afternoon, I was put to bed to take a nap in Tuo Er Suo. I shared a small bed with another kid who did not have a blanket. It was so cold, he (I can't remember if it was he or she) took my blanket, the nice blanket Papa and Mama bought me. He did not even share the blanket with me. I felt cold but dared not speak out or cry out. My tears wet the pillow. I felt I was dreaming, I saw Papa and Mama in the dream. When grandmother came to pick me up that afternoon, she found I was having a high fever. I was half conscious. Grandmother sent an urgent telegram to my parents (there was no telephone then), and Mother came back to see me. To make things worse, Mother was so worried when she arrived that she fed me the wrong medicine. She fed me the poisonous medicinal liquor for fractures, which was put together with some other medicines by Grandmother. Grandmother later described the scene to me: "Your mother was mad when she found out that. She carried you and ran to the Children's Hospital. You know, there was no taxi; and it took years to wait for the public bus. I did not know how your Mother managed to carry you to run such a long way to the hospital. We all thought you were dying. I sent another telegram to your Father and he came back the next day. The doctors pumped your stomach and you magically survived. Thank Godness." Father and Mother decided to take me back to stay with them. Before we left, Grandmother kept saying: "Qing should come back to the city to attend primary school later. How can she climb those mountains to go to school? She looks so weak. She can't do that."

## 3. "When I was just a little girl, I asked my mother what will I be"

I was back to the mountains and rivers in the wilderness. I started to make friends with other kids in the area. I was happier than before until one day I saw my friend holding a doll in her hands. It was so attractive and pretty. I had never seen a doll before. I went back home and told Mother about the doll I saw. "It was beautiful, Mama. Why didn't you ever give me one? Can I have one?" I asked Mother. "We will buy you one later, when Papa and Mama save up enough money." Mother said. "But when?" I kept asking the same questions and went to see the lovely doll every day. I wished it were my doll. And I was angry with Mama that she did not keep her promise to buy me one. Until one day, I suddenly "grew up".

Tuo Er Suo center was actually a room, a dark and cold room packed with kids.

One afternoon, while I was playing with my little friends along the riverside, I found something shining on the sand. I went over and saw a watch. I picked it up and recognized it was Papa's watch. I could not be wrong. It was Papa's watch. I saw Papa wearing it everyday on his hand. Papa must have forgotten his watch after washing clothes along the riverside. I put the watch in my pocket and ran home rapidly. When I got home, before I had a chance to talk, Mother told me in a very low voice: "Be a good girl today. Don't bother Papa. Don't ask about the doll. Papa is not in a good mood today. He has lost his watch." A watch was something expensive during the Cultural Revolution. Father looked unhappy and worried. I suddenly felt very guilty, even as a little girl, for asking them to buy me a doll all the time. "But I found Papa's watch." I shouted out. The rest of the story can be imagined: Papa and Mama were excited and asked me where I found the watch and how I found it. I told them in detail, feeling very proud of myself. I did not ask for a doll after that, and I did not get my own doll until we left the mountains and settled down in a town.

## 4. "If only I had thousands of great mansions to house all the poor in the world, so that everyone will be happy."

Now in retrospect, I can still feel the pain Father and Mother suffered during those days. Physical hardship may be tolerable, but spiritual torture is always hard to bear. Being exiled from paradise, Father and Mother, and many others, survived with

Sometimes Grandmother agreed and let me stay home by myself. I was alone and felt lonely. I hated the darkness surrounding me. I did not turn on the light, as Grandmother told me many times that we could not afford to pay the electricity.

their broken dreams. "In this era without heroes, I just want to live as an ordinary man." I never fail to feel the dilemma Chinese intellectuals faced in the past half century, especially after the economic transformations, during which period the Chinese government developed policies to boost the country's economy, in order to build up a new image to the world and to people in the country, who lost their trust in the government after what happened in Tiananmen Square in 1989. In the eyes of the Communist Party, intellectuals are a group suspected of being rebellious: they act according to their conscience and cry for justice for the public. The best way to control intellectuals is to always keep them on the edge of the survival. Spiritual independence and human dignity can hardly be achieved without financial independence. Intellectuals, including educators, have to choose between being rich in knowledge and reputation but poor in income and in material goods. How many human beings still have the heart to rebel if they have a little daughter at home, waiting for milk, waiting for a doll, waiting for light.

Father's spirit was never beaten. Every night he taught himself English by reciting vocabulary from the English version of Chairman Mao's red book – the only available source for English learning at that time.

## 5. Moving the Mountains

Father's spirit was never beaten. Every night he taught himself English by reciting vocabulary from the English version of Chairman Mao's red book – the only available source for English learning at that time; and holding our very old-fashioned radio listening to a program called "VOA" (Voice of America). I saw Father writing down English words on small cards and carrying them wherever he went. When I asked him why he did that, he explained in a very simple way that he wanted to learn English. I still could not understand why he needed to learn English. What confused me more was that Father asked me not to tell people that he listened to VOA; otherwise we would "get into trouble". He looked serious when he said that and I made sure that I did not let out his secret. But, I was puzzled by all his time-consuming and secret language study.

What surprises me most is that by using this unbelievably primitive teach-yourself method, Father successfully mastered a large vocabulary and complex grammar rules, which enabled him to publish translations of medical research papers in journals later in his life.

The mystery is no longer a mystery for me today: For political reasons, Father did not get the chance to study English in university; instead, he studied Russian. Driven inside by a strong desire to know about Western culture, politics and government systems, and most of all - to update himself about what was actually happening in the world, Father embarked upon his dangerous English-learning journey. Listening to "VOA" during the Cultural Revolution was enough to label him a "counter-revolutionary", an illegal action serious enough to send him to prison. People growing up in a democratic country may find it hard to understand how precious the voice of truth is for those who are kept away from truth in darkness.

Even now, I am still amazed by Father's strong motivation for language learning in that difficult situation. What surprises me most is that by using this unbelievably primitive teach-yourself method, Father successfully mastered a large vocabulary and complex grammar rules, which enabled him to publish translations of medical research papers in journals later in his life.

## 6. Lighting the candles

Father's teach-yourself language learning experience is not limited to English. He taught himself the writing of pre-Tang poetry in ancient Chinese, a valuable part of the classical Chinese literature. Like Latin or Greek, Anglo-Saxon Norse or Celtic to English, ancient Chinese is like a different language for most of the Chinese. It is very different from the modern language. To understand verse, rhymes, and allusions in those poems in ancient Chinese, is as difficult as, if not more difficult than, to understand sonnets by Shakespeare, not to mention the writing of them. Being a big fan of the ancient Chinese poems, Father meant to major in classical Chinese literature in university. Unfortunately, because of his family background, he could not apply to any departments related to arts, which once again, had a lot to do with the then socio-political situation. Father decided to teach himself. Whenever he had time, Father went to a bookstore which sold ancient books and read there for hours, since he could not afford to buy any. Every time, Father had to walk without shoes for two hours from school to the store. It was under these poor conditions that Father taught himself the writing of ancient poems. When Father first published his poem collection *Lighting the Candles*, I read comments on his accomplishment, saying that it was not common to see a medical school graduate publishing a collection of ancient Chinese poems, a feat, which might not be possible even for those majoring in classical Chinese literature for four years in university.

## 7. If winter comes, would spring be far behind?

The title of the collection *Lighting the Candles* comes from a famous ancient house-hold Chinese saying: "Zhou Guan (the one who is in power) can feel free to set fire; while the commoners are not even allowed to light the candles." Father has lit the

candles in my heart: Whenever I am in darkness, I will think of the spirit of Father, and many others of their generation, who never stop conquering darkness for light. The seeds of hope and the trees of knowledge they planted in my heart will blossom, guiding me towards light, till the end of my life.

## 8. How many miles must a man walk down, before we can call him a man?

Because of Mother's special profession, an opera actress, by the end of the Cultural Revolution, she was chosen to work for an opera group in a small town close to the city where Father and Mother grew up and went to university. Father and I were also approved to leave the mountain area with Mother as a special condition. Father viewed this chance as the first step to escape from the ignorant and primitive although the chance of returning to the city was very slim. Father and Mother packed every little thing we had and we got on the train. I was once again on a journey to a strange world.

## 9. Whoever treasures freedom, like a swallow has to learn to fly

When we got to the so-called town, we found we were actually in another backward village. Father was assigned to work in the People's hospital. Although he no longer worked with the bare-foot doctor, he still needed to go to remote villages to treat patients from time to time. Most of the time I stayed with Mother, with her opera group, traveling from one place to another. I was still a very shy and silent girl, but I was exposed to different people, different places and new things. I saw people talk to Mother with admiration, saying she was a rising star of the opera stage. One day I went up to Father and talked to him seriously. I told him I didn't want to stay in that town any more. I told him it was boring living there. I wanted to go to the city, like the city Mother had traveled to with me. I wanted to get out of the town. I could not remember the details of Father's reply. He said a lot. The only thing I remembered was that Father told me if I wanted to get out of the town, I should know how to fly, like the free birds in the sky.

Father and Mother taught me writing and reading Chinese characters. I was also required to recite three English words and one ancient Chinese poem every day as a condition to go out to play with other kids. Those English words and ancient Chinese couplets were simply sounds to me, and did not make any sense. I saw no point in doing that as none of my little friends had the same task. However, I did as I was asked in order to trade playtime with my authoritative father. Realizing that I needed a better language-learning environment and motivation, Father later spent all his savings to buy me a tape recorder, the most luxurious asset we owned at that time. Father even managed to buy a set of language learning materials with a book and two tapes from Hong Kong. I was quickly attracted by the colourful textbook and the fascinating music between each conversation on the tape. I tried to attach the English words to the corresponding pictures in the book and figure out the words spoken in the conversation. In spite of the fact that I still could not spell a single English word, nor understand a single sentence from the conversation, this learning process later proved to be extremely helpful. When I first started my formal English education in primary school, I found myself far ahead of others in terms of the amount of vocabulary I grasped, and the ability to distinguish words in different contexts.

Before I understood enough words to read, Mother read me lots of story-books. Father bought me some colorful books of science stories. Unfortunately, I turned out to be very slow in science. By the time I could read articles in the newspaper, Father chose some articles which he thought suitable for me to read. Every night at dinner time, we sat around our little dining table and discussed what I read in the newspaper. I was encouraged to voice my opinions. For most of the Chinese, sitting and chatting around the dining table is the real sense of home for family members. Our "home" continued until my parents divorced many years later. Although we later had a very nice big house, and although I later drifted from one corner of the world to another, those moments we spent in the crowded 24-square-meter home kept coming back to me. I dreamed of our family conversations around the dining table. I wished I had never awakened.

During festivals such as the Spring Festival, Father and Mother took me back to the city to see my grandmothers, uncles and aunts. The idea of going to the city was exciting, but the trip was terrifying. We first took the bus, then transferred to a ship. Both the bus and the ship were fully packed with people. I was small and therefore nobody noticed my existence. People always stepped on me and I cried out to protest. I kept telling Mother I could not breathe but there was nothing she could do, since it was impossible for them to hold me in their arms while the bus was moving. They needed both arms to stand safely.

Father has lit the candles in my heart: Whenever I am in darkness, I will think of the spirit of Father, and many others of their generation, who never stop conquering darkness for light.

One day I went up to Father and talked to him seriously. I told him I didn't want to stay in that town any more. Father told me if I wanted to get out of the town, I should know how to fly, like the free birds in the sky.

Once we got off the bus, Father and Mother had to run very fast to find seats on the ship, since seats on the ship were not assigned beforehand when the tickets were issued. Father and Mother ran so fast that I was so worried that they would lose me. People pushed me in different directions and I was not sure where I was heading. I kept shouting "Mama wait for me. I am here. Wait for me." Mother would usually stop and hold me in her arms. Father sometimes also slowed down to make sure we were all right. In this case, we would fail to get a seat and I had to stand several hours with the crowd. My little feet soon got tired, and Father and Mother had to take turns to hold me in their arms. I looked into the sky – I wished I was one of those birds, flying freely through the sky.

I also overheard the conversations among adults, saying that Father could have been appointed as the president of the hospital, which meant we would be assigned a large house with beautiful decorations and get his salary raised, if only Father agreed to join the Communist Party. But he did not agree.

## 10. "We are the successor of the communist cause"

I went to primary school and middle school in the same town. Growing up under the strange communist propaganda, I became one of the sons and daughters of the red five-star flag. I believed in the principle of rightness. I had dreams and I admired heroes. I was enthusiastic and passionate. The first sentence I learned to write in school was "We are the successors of the Communist Cause."

Father had been busy with his work and his writings; in order to spend more time with me, Mother quit her performance on the stage. I became active in all kinds of school activities and won many prizes for various competitions and contests. I read books I found interesting from Father's desk and wrote my own diaries. I loved subjects related to arts, but continuously failed all science exams. Father said I was hopeless in mathematics. I knew Father always scored full marks for maths when he was in medical school. I told Mother there might be something wrong with my DNA. Science teachers in school did not like me and they believed my failure in science subjects was a result of my spending too much time playing around. Extracurricular activities were considered a waste of time in most of my teachers' eyes.

When I grew up and came to understand the world better, I could strongly sense the impact of Father's charm of spirit on me, even when I was like a boat drifting in the sea, and a candle blowing in the wind.

## 11. The Charm of Spirit

Father kept writing late every night. I once overheard Mother say that the money Father received for his publications was not enough to pay for the electricity. I also overheard the conversations among adults, saying that Father could have been appointed as the president of the hospital, which meant we would be assigned a large house with beautiful decorations and get his salary raised, if only Father agreed to join the Communist Party. But he did not agree. At that time, I did not understand why Father was so stubborn with his so-called belief and conscience. In a young girl's eyes, a comfortable house weighs more than belief and conscience.

That was not all. Like most of the Chinese intellectuals, Father took a nap every noon before he went to work in the afternoon. Father said the nap helped him to work more efficiently and asked me to keep absolutely quiet at noon. But there was an exception. Father asked me to wake him up if patients came to see him on Wednesday. On those days Father wrote them prescriptions and they left happily. Father was not paid to do that. In China, even if a doctor saw 1000 patients a day, he/she would be paid the same salary. I became very jealous and did not understand why those patients did not go to the hospital, but came to our house to wake Father up. Father seemed to see into my mind and explained to me. "Those patients were living on their boats in some remote villages. They came every Wednesday for my specialist service." Father explained, " They set out before midnight on Tuesday night and have to row many hours until they get here at noon. If they had to line up in the hospital in the afternoon, they would not be able to arrive home until tomorrow. People like them are living a very difficult life. You are very much blessed. You should learn how to value what you have, and meanwhile, learn to understand others' difficulties. Learn to be compassionate, be warmhearted. Live with conscience and integrity. I think you are old enough to learn how to be a decent human being."

When I grew up and came to understand the world better, I could strongly sense the impact of Father's charm of spirit on me, even when I was like a boat drifting in the sea, and a candle blowing in the wind.

## 12. If the Ice Age is over now, why is there still ice everywhere?

The year I was supposed to go to university, I was recommended by my high school to the English Department of a University. Being a recommended student means you do not have to take the horrible "once in a life time" National Matriculation Exam", which decides every student's future in China. Universities admit you as long as you do well on the test of the particular major. I took the English tests of the university I was recommended to and scored top

marks in both oral and written tests. The whole family was very happy and we took it for granted that I would receive the admission letter soon. My teachers said if I did not get it nobody would. I did not even go back to school for those preparations for the National Exam. Then the nightmare came. Weeks before the life-or-death National Exam, I was told that I had been rejected by the university; my place was taken by a grademate, whose school performance in every area was by no means comparable to mine, but whose Father was in charge of the admission affairs of the town. She hadn't even expected to be admitted.

Within a few days, Father started to do the last thing he would do in his life - visiting some "influential" and "powerful" people, carrying all the money our family saved up. Compared with power, the money we had was too little to change the cruel reality. The blow was too much for a girl of 18, with dreams and hopes for the future. I kept crying until I lost my voice. Father came beside my bed and put his hand on my shoulder. He lowered down his head, and said to me in a deep, low voice: " Qing, I am sorry. I am so sorry..." That was the first time, and the only time, in my life, I saw Father crying in front of me. I knew what was in his mind. He was sorry because he sacrificed my future for his belief and integrity. I wiped off my tears and promised myself: I would never make Father feel sorry for me again.

I almost did not sleep for the coming few weeks before the National exam. I exceeded my normal performance and was admitted to a much better university. That was the first time I passed a mathematics exam in high school. My mathematics teacher said it was magic.

I never mentioned that sad summer to Father again. But I know for sure, we would never forget the unforgettable, although we do not want to recall the pain.

## 13. The pledge we write with our lives, will some day clear up the sky of the People's Republic of China.

The year 1989 changed my whole world – for the first time I realized something in the world needed to be written. I live to write life, and I write to reflect life. From the hunger strike to the blood-shedding in Tiananmen Square on June 4, I was overwhelmed by the 1989 democratic movement. Those feelings are beyond description. I chose not to recall them in writing. Like many others of the Tiananmen Generation, I do not own a key to my June 4 Complex.

By the time I went to university, China was undergoing dramatic economic and social changes. Unlike the high-sounding slogans for the communist cause in the early years, the system of symbolic and ideological controls in education was actually shaken by both public and underground discussions and voices of disagreements on political issues. Foreign language literature and writing, the ever-sensitive subject, were handled with care by professors to "align with state ideological interests and the values of the public; and to conform to the state policy: "To keep a clear head, firmly resist corrosion by decadent ideas from abroad, and never permit the bourgeois way of life to spread in our country." We read novels such as *Wuthering Heights*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *Jane Eyre*, *and A Tale of Two Cities* and did huge amounts of translation on these works. While doing translation or writing feedback, I started to pay more attention to thoughts and themes. Writing became closely related to reading, especially in the field of literature - literature shaped my mind and writing expressed my mind; on the other hand, writing helped me to reconstruct my thoughts which led to my change of world view. This may be the reason that novels like *Animal Farm* have never been available for English learners in China. In addition to themes and thoughts, I was interested in the various descriptions of humans' passions, under different social contexts and different periods of time in history. I noticed people at different times, in different locations, sometimes shared what they believe in and what they strive for. History can be surprisingly similar and repetitive.

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## 14. Where is the sky without rain

Upon university graduation, I left the city and returned to the town where I grew up to work. By then the town had become a prosperous area in China. It attracted lots of graduates from top universities around the country. I suddenly felt that life could be so unexpected. To me, the town was a materially rich but spiritually poor place, but people did not seem to care. I worked for two state banks for a while then returned to the city to work. People said I was stupid to leave such a well-paid job and such a rich area. I started to feel the mental struggle Father and Mother went through when they were as young as I was. It must have been much harder for them. They had no choice.

I always went back, since my early childhood, without knowing where I belonged or my destination. To simply my life is like this: city-town-city-town-city. It is like a circle. The totally different life values between the city and town, the material world and the spiritual world, the intellectual world and the commercial world, always split me into two. I sometimes feel I belong to both but sometimes feel that I am refused by both. Exile does not need roots.

## 15. Descendents of the Dragon

I realized how heavy it can be to be a descendant of the Dragon. I hope the younger generation, in our world, can have an easier life journey, with light on their paths.

From the Cultural Revolution to the Tiananmen Generation, I went through the difficult economic depression in the 1970s, was fascinated by the exciting flourishing of ideas and culture in the early 80s, inspired by the first taste of freedom of speech and thought in the mid 80s, shocked by the overwhelming student movement in 1989, a witness to the economic boom in the early 90s; and eventually a participant in the uncertain "immigration rush" at the end of the 90s. I realized how heavy it can be to be a descendant of the Dragon. I hope the younger generation, in our world, can have an easier life journey, with light on their paths.

## 16. I believe that children are our future

In 1996, my favorite student, John, who now calls me "sister", ranked first in the National Matriculation Exam and was admitted by the top university in China. Before that, I never, ever, dared to believe, or even imagine that education could change a person's life like that.

The Charm of Spirit will carry on forever, from one generation to the other. It lights the candles for those in darkness, and moves mountains to make paths for travelers in their life journey. If we want light, we must conquer darkness.

I first met John during my teacher training in his school. He was then a naughty and rebellious boy, disliked by teachers and students. Like many of the others, I did not pay too much attention to him until one day I paid him a 'family visit' and got to know the story of his family.

John's grandfather was an academic authority before the Cultural Revolution and was persecuted during that crazy movement. Being a daughter of an "anti-revolutionary", John's mother married a man who later beat them all the time. The torture ended with the divorce of his parents. But the tragedy was by no means over. John was brought up under the shadow of a single-parent family. I just could not help feeling sad when I visited their small shabby home. Well understanding how difficult it was for a female intellectual to raise a family in China, I decided to help John. What I had undergone was too much already; I did not want to see it happen again to any other children.

Since then (even after my university graduation), I kept visiting John in school and at home; John came to stay with me for his vacations. He enjoyed sleeping on the floor of my room and talking to me until midnight about life and dreams. I was happy to see his change well on the way. Once John's mother became ill in hospital, I went to see her and comfort her in spite of my busy work. John said he owed me too much and did not know how to pay me back. I told him what he owed me was becoming a decent person. He promised he would never let me down.

John did not let me down. He turned out to be a boy with pride and dignity. He turned down my money each time I tried to give it to him. He turned out to be first in the National exam. When I read about John's good news in the newspaper, I called him at home. His mother was sobbing: "We have been waiting for your call. Everybody has called. The newspaper came, the radio came, the magazine came. But we wanted to share this good news with you..." I could not keep back my tears either, on the Canadian end of the phone line.

People in the world might have different dreams. There may be many dreams that you can never fulfil in life. John is my dream. John has fulfilled my dream. In this dream, I see the Charm of Spirit, the Charm of Education. He proved for me my education motto: As long as you stick to it long enough, hard enough, you will make it.

## 17. Life is too short for waiting when I see the setting sun, and I know again that I must carry on.

Every life would come to an end in its last page; however, the Charm of Spirit will carry on forever, from one generation to the other. It lights the candles for those in darkness, and moves mountains to make paths for travelers in their life journey. If we want light, we must conquer darkness.

*Rowena Xiaoqing He is an ESL high school student.*

# Language Profile

*Dear Colleagues,*

*As I noted in the last profile on Armenian, I am also involved in the research and presentation of Canada's heritage languages. With that in mind, future editions will include Romanian, German, Greek and French, just to name a few that have added to the rich tapestry of our Canadian fabric.*

*The editorial board has made an rather interesting observation of the language profiles as to how they have evolved over the years. Originally they gave only information about linguistic structure, but as we are all well aware of, language is much more than that - it is shaped by its history and culture, and the notes in these two areas have grown as well. It is perhaps time to rename this section "Language and its Heritage profile".*

*So far in this series the following languages have been profiled: Persian, Tamil, Arabic, Somali, Spanish, Tgringa, Amharic, Turkish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Polish, Russian/Ukrainian, Hebrew, Panjabi and Hindi, Tagalog, Albanian, Croatian/Serbian/Bosnian and Armenian. In this issue a language from Europe, even though it doesn't belong to the Indo-European group of languages, is being profiled – Hungarian. I would like to thank Ágnes Zalai and her community for providing the following information on this language, history and culture.*

*Just a note – many of you have been very kind in your encouragement of these profiles and have asked for back copies of profiles you have missed - ALPA Plus at 1-800-788-1120 or info@alphaplus.ca has back issues of* ***Contact*** *beginning with the first profile, Persian, in the Fall, 1992 Vol. 18, # 1 issue.*

*I also hope within a year to have the profiles published. In the meantime, as a TESL Ontario member, enjoy one of the many benefits which includes* ***Contact*** *with these profiles.*

*Cathy Haghighat*

# Hungarian

## BACKGROUND

Hungarian, the official language of Hungary, is the primary language of the Carpathian Basin. The Hungarian language area is represented by several million speakers outside the boundaries of Hungary, mostly in Romanian Transylvania and in Slovakia. To the south it extends into Croatia and the former Yugoslavia. There are about 10.7 million Hungarian speakers in Hungary with about 3 million Hungarians living in Romania, Slovakia, Croatia and Serbia. Also, the emigration of 1.3 million people before World War I plus emigration in 1918-19, the 1930s, 1944 and 1956 have created Hungarian communities in North America, western Europe and Australia. After the collapse of communism and the splintering of Yugoslavia, roughly 100,000 refugees immigrated to Hungary from Romania and the former Yugoslav federation. Half of them were ethnic Hungarians.

The Hungarian language is classified as a member of the Ugric branch of the Uralic languages. It is most closely related to the Ob-Ugric languages of Khanty and Mansi which are spoken east of the Ural Mountains. It is also distantly related to Finnish and Estonian, Sami languages of far northern Scandinavia and to the Samoyedic languages of Siberia. There have also been discussions about its relation to Japanese and Turkish. Languages most closely related to Hungarian now are Vogul and Ostyak which are spoken near the Ob´ River in the western region of Siberia. It is believed that they separated 2,000 years ago and moved west reaching their present location in 900 CE.

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The earliest known manuscript in a Uralic language is a Hungarian funeral oration (Halotti Beszéd), a translation from Latin at the turn of the 13th century CE. The language has been written using a modified Latin alphabet since the 13th century. Its orthography became standardized in the 16th century with the introduction of the printing press. Hungarian is characterized by its acute accent ó marking the long vowels and its specialized sibilants – sz(s) and s(sh).

The language has been written using a modified Latin alphabet since the 13th century.

Modern Hungarian has eight major dialects, all mutually intelligible. Budapest is located near the crossroads of three dialect areas: the South, Trans-

Danubian, and Palóc (Northwestern). As a result of post war treaties following both world wars,(Treaty of Trianon), two dialects (Central Transylvanian and Székely) lie almost entirely within Romania, and the remaining six dialects are found in the neighbouring countries.

The Hungarians' own name for themselves is magyar. Other Western names were hongrois(French), Ungar (German) and vengr (Russian). The names stem from the name of an early Turkish confederacy of tribes or hordes, the on-ogur ( 10 tribes ) to which the Hungarians joined in their western wanderings. This confederacy has no relationship to the ancient Huns, a Turkic tribe. One of the earliest recorded references to the Hungarians was in a Byzantine geographical survey by Constantine VII, "Porphyrogenitus" in the 10th century. It lists the megyer as one of the Hungarian tribes, but the Hungarians were not distinguished from their once Turkish allies.

Hungary came into being when the Magyars, a Finno-Ugric people, occupied the mid area of the Danube River in the late 9th century CE, an area once occupied by the Celts.

Hungary came into being when the Magyars, a Finno-Ugric people, occupied the mid area of the Danube River in the late 9th century CE, an area once occupied by the Celts. Parts of its territory formed the Roman provinces of Pannonia and Dacia. When Rome lost control of Pannonia at the end of the 4th century, it was occupied by Germanic tribes and then by Slavs. The central plains formed the bases of nomadic people from the steppes of the Black Sea – the Huns, Bulgars and Avars.

The early Hungarians moved south into the steppe region below the Urals. As mounted nomads they moved westward, reaching and conquering the Carpathian Basin in the period of 895-896. The Hungarians came under the influence of Papal Rome through their first Christian king, Stephen (István), in 1001 and used Latin for official purposes well into the 19th century. Following a Hungarian defeat at the Battle of Mohács in 1526, Hungary was occupied by the Turks, who in turn were deposed by the Habsburgs in the late 17th century.

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## HISTORY

In 892 the Carolingian emperor Arnulf called in the help of the Magyars. In the 9th century they comprised a federation of hordes, or tribes, each under a hereditary chieftain and each composed of a varying number of clans, whose members shared a blood kinship. There were seven Magyar hordes, but others were also part of the federation, including three hordes of Turkic Khazars (the Kavars). This federation was known to its neighbours as the On-Ogur (Ten Arrows – Slavic), from which the word "Hungarian" came into English.

Their chief, Árpád, the leader of their most powerful tribe, the Magyars, answered Arnulf's call, and he and his hordes crossed the Carpathians and subjugated the people of the central plain. They destroyed the Moravian empire in 906 and in the next year occupied Pannonia. They were then established in the central basin. Árpád and his tribe took the central area west of the Danube.

During the next 50 years the Magyars were known to the Europeans for their raids or for their military service to warring princes until their defeat at the hands of King Otto I in 955. Both the Eastern and Western churches strove to Christianize them along with the other people of east-central Europe. When Árpád's great-grandson, Géza, reestablished his authority over the tribal chiefs in 972, he sent an embassy to the Holy Roman emperor Otto II, and in 975 he and his family were received into the Western church. In 996 his son, Stephen, married Gisella, a Bavarian princess. During his reign Hungary was peaceful and prospered, but, thereafter, for the next 200 years, disputes erupted in the kingdom for the right to rule. Only through the efforts of Laszlo I, Hungary's greatest king, and Kálmán were the new founded religion and national unity protected and expanded into the area around the Sava and Drava Rivers, Transylvania, Croatia, Bosnia and Dalmatia. Up to this time the kings of Hungary were absolute patriarchs of the nation who settled opposition by confiscation of land. However, under Andrew II his misrule caused a revolt of the nobility in his issuing of the Golden Bull in 1222, an equivalent to the British Magna Carta. Thereafter, all Hungarian kings had to swear to uphold the constitution that enshrined the rights of the nobility, the rights of the country and the right to refuse to follow an unlawful command.

Shortly afterwards, Hungary underwent a devastating blow at the hands of the Mongols in 1241. In that invasion most of the cities and structures were destroyed, and Hungary lost half its population. Béla IV returned from Dalmatia with the task of rebuilding his country. By 1301 the old Árpád dynasty had died out. The kingship then passed into foreign hands related to the Árpád line. This caused Hungary problems over the centuries as these foreign kings were often absent and exploited Hungary's resources and the military. Still the 14th century is considered to be Hungary's Golden Age as it was a time of peace.

Eventually, the country tired of foreign rule and its agents, and in 1458, a great envoy of nobles acclaimed Matthew king and set forth to bring their king home. Taken from his prison in Prague, Matthew was brought to Buda and crowned .

The only national king to reign over all Hungary after the Árpáds, Matthew Corvinus has been viewed as a true Renaissance prince. He was a fine natural soldier, a first-class administrator, an outstanding linguist, a learned astrologer, and an enlightened patron of the arts and learning. His collections of illuminated manuscripts, pictures, statues, and jewels were famous throughout Europe. Artists and scholars were welcomed at his court. Elaborate buildings sprang up in the capital and other centres.

However, following Matthew's death and years of weak leadership, danger loomed on the horizon from the powerful Ottomans. Hungary was in a weakened state. The new Ottoman sultan, Süleyman I the Magnificent, demanded tribute from King Louis II in 1521. The tribute was refused.

Therefore, in 1526 the sultan advanced into Hungary. Louis, with a force of 16,000 men, attacked the Turks at Mohács. The Hungarian army, heavily outnumbered, was almost annihilated. Louis drowned during his flight. The sultan advanced until he occupied Buda.

Under Prince Eugene of Savoy a series of campaigns were launched against the Ottomans until all western and central Hungary, including Buda, were cleared of the Turks in 1686. By the Treaty of Carlowitz , the sultan relinquished all of Hungary except the corner between the Maros and Tisza rivers.

This release, however, also brought Hungary under the Austrian power. When Maria Theresa's son, Joseph II, became emperor in 1780, he avoided the obligation of a king on coronation to swear allegiance to the constitution by not submitting himself to a coronation at all. He had the holy crown conveyed to Vienna. Joseph drew Hungary into the Habsburg realm. Thus, German was made the language of government and all education above the elementary level. However, his successor, Leopold II (1790-92), restored the ancient constitution. In time a dual system was established.

The Compromise (Ausgleich) of 1867 under Franz Joseph restored territorial borders to Hungary, and he gave Hungary more real internal independence than it had had since 1526. This was later threatened by the heir to the throne, Franz Ferdinand, who was anti-Hungarian. His assassination plunged the area into World War I. Charles took up the leadership after the death of Franz Joseph.

In 1918 after the defeat of World War I Charles appointed Károlyi prime minister. After the monarchy signed the armistice, the National Council dissolved Parliament and proclaimed Hungary an independent republic, with Károlyi provisional president. Serb, Czech and Romanian troops occupied two-thirds of Hungary. In March 1919 Károlyi's government was replaced by a soviet republic, controlled by Béla Kun. The Allies insisted on the formation of a provisional regime to include democratic elements with free elections. The Romanians retreated across the Tisza River, and a government, under the presidency of Károly Huszár, was formed in November 1919. The institution of the monarchy was restored. In the interim Admiral Miklós Horthy, who had organized the counterrevolutionary armed forces, was elected regent as provisional head of state. The Huszár government then resigned, and on March 14 a coalition government, composed of the two main parties in the Parliament took office under Sándor Simonyi-Semadam.

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At the Treaty of Trianon (June 4, 1920) the Allies assumed that Hungary's non-Hungarian populations wished to leave Hungary and allowed successor states,such as Czechoslovakia, to annex large areas of the ethnic Hungarian population. The final result left Hungary with only 35,893 of the 125,641 square miles that had once constituted the lands of the Hungarian crown. Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia took large fragments, while others went to Austria and even Poland and Italy. Of the population of 20,866,447, Hungary was left with about a third. Romania received 25%; Czechoslovakia, 14%; Yugoslavia, 20%; and Austria, 2% Of the 10 million persons for whom Hungarian was the mother tongue, 3 million were allotted to the successor states. In addition, the treaty required Hungary to pay in reparations an unspecified sum and limited its armed forces. This treaty, loss of land and people created deep resentment in the nation.

This loss of land and people was only the start of such loss which became greater with Hungary's involvement in World War II as Germany's ally.

The peace treaty signed in Paris on February 10, 1947 restored the Trianon frontiers, with a decision in favour of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. The implementation of the treaty was to be super-

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vised by a Soviet occupation force which would remain largely in the country.

In August 1949 Hungary became a "people's republic".

In July 1953 Imre Nagy promised a new course, but Moscow hesitated to support him. In the spring of 1955 Nagy was dismissed from office and expelled from the party. On October 23 students in Budapest staged a great procession with the presentation of a petition asking for redress of the nation's grievances. People joined them. The police fired into the crowds. The army joined the revolutionaries, and army depots and munitions factories handed out arms. Nagy resumed power of a genuine coalition government composed of Smallholders, Social Democrats, and National Peasants with a "Catholic Association".

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The Soviet troops withdrew, and Nagy began negotiating for the complete evacuation of Hungary. In November he announced Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and asked the United Nations to recognize Hungary as a neutral state, under the joint protection of the Great Powers. Nagy's denunciation of the Warsaw Pact was too threatening, and Soviet tanks began to return from the border. Then the tanks entered Budapest. Nagy took refuge in the Yugoslav embassy and Cardinal Mindszenty in the U.S. legation. Nagy was abducted to Romania. After a secret trial he, Maléter, and a few close associates were executed in 1958. 200,000 refugees escaped to the West. Thus, a substantial proportion of Hungary's educated classes was lost to the country.

However, by 1989, as communism began to lose its power among the Eastern block, the long-closed border between Hungary and Austria was opened.

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Agreements with Slovakia and Romania, and an active contribution in international peacekeeping actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina helped the country achieve the threshold of acceptance by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union.

| | ENGLISH | HUNGARIAN |
|---|---|---|
| **LANGUAGE FAMILY** | Indo - European (Germanic branch) | Finno - Ugric (Ugric branch) |

Hungarian is an agglutinative language which means its vocabulary is composed of suffixes and prefixes added to a root that produces compound words to reflect meaning. Hungarian also belongs to the same family group as Finnish, Estonian as well as having links to Turkish, Mongolian and Japanese.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **WRITING SYSTEM** | - alphabet, Latin script<br>- non-phonetic<br>- written from left to right<br>- letters disconnected<br>- printed/written script | - alphabet, Latin script<br>- phonetic<br>- written from left to right<br>- letters disconnected<br>- printed/written script |
| **# OF LETTERS** | 26 | 44 |
| **VOWELS** | 15-16 (spoken)<br>6 written | 14<br>7 long (accented ´) - 7 short (unaccented) - no diphthongs - all vowels pronounced separately |

Hungarian relies on vowel harmony for its choice of affixes. If the stem has a back vowel, then so must the affix. Therefore, all suffixes come in pairs – a set for the back and a set for the front vowels. If a word has a mix of vowel types, the suffix harmonizes with the end vowel of the stem. A third type also exists that is a sub category of vowels. Back and front vowels cannot be used in the same word.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **DIFFERENT CONSONANTS** | TH(this/the)/W/NG(sing) | 7 digraphs - sz, cs, zs, ty, gy, ny, ly - ny /ñ/ gy, ty (palatal) |

cs=ch s=sh Csardas=Chardash sz=s zs=z as in pleasure ty=t c=ts ny=ñ ly=y gy = d^j Nagy

| | ENGLISH | HUNGARIAN |
|---|---|---|
| Clusters are simple(2) and are usually not found at the beginning of words. | | |
| **CAPITALIZATION** | - begin new sentences with capitals | - begin new sentences with capitals as well as proper nouns except for the names of languages |
| **COMBINATION OF LETTERS** | - each syllable has a vowel/consonant sound<br>- many consonant clusters | - each syllable has a vowel/consonant sound<br>- many consonant clusters |
| **STRESS** | - usually falls on the first syllable | - always falls on the first syllable<br>- long accented vowels change quality but not stress |
| **NUMBERS** | - written from left to right | - written from left to right |
| **ORDER** | | |
| * sentence | - subject + verb + object<br>- time words appear at the end or beginning of the sentence | - flexible order as declension suffixes indicate subject vs object<br>- direct objects recognized by suffix = **t**<br>- time words appear at the end or beginning of the sentence |
| * adjective | - adjective + noun | - adjective + noun |
| **NOUNS** | - a, an, the<br>- indefinite - a, an + noun<br>- definite - the + noun | - choice of a multiple of suffixes to show case and vowel harmony<br>- **egy** = one but can be dropped<br>- **a** or **aw** (vowel harmony)<br>- **nak/nek** = indirect object suffixes<br>- **t** = direct object suffix |

There are 12 case endings, but there is no gender differentiation which accounts for the common error of "he" and "she" being mixed in English.

Postpostions are suffixed to the noun. The pospostions of motion consist of 3 types:
enclosed space
on to
point in space

Hungarian nouns will be singular if they have a quantifier such as "a hundred book".
Hungarian suffix order is that the plural suffix is attached first before its declension suffix.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **VERBS** | - subject is separate<br>- verb only inflected for some verbs (to be) and in some tenses(to have) | - subject is optional except for emphasis<br>- suffixes indicate person, number, tense, mood and presence or absence of object |

For equational sentences Hungarian drops "is" in the third person singular – "He (is) a teacher". "The house (is) white."

The verb "to have," meaning "to possess," has no equivalent in Hungarian. Instead Hungarian uses the possessive **János-nak van egy ház-a**. *John-to is one house-his.*= John has a house.

adjectives + **van**. It takes a there is/there are type structure.

I have money = There is my money = **Van pénzem.**
There is = **van** There are = **vannak**

Hungarian verbs are broken into 2 types - indefinite and definite.

**INDEFINITE**
intransitive verbs
transitive verbs if general in meaning and use no object in the sentence EX: I am reading = Olvasok.
object of the the first or second person of the verb

**DEFINITE**
transitive verbs – definite in meaning EX: I am reading it. = Olvasnál.
object of 3rd person of the verb

Hungarian makes use of the Germanic system for the perfect tenses using the verb "to be" conjugated + verb

*You asked for a book (indef.).*
Kértél egy könyvet. Kértél = asked you, indirect conjunction **egy** = a **könyvet** = book + indirect suffix of **vet**

*You asked for a book (def.).*
**Kértéd a könyvet. Kértéd** = asked you, direct conjunction **a** = the **könyvet** = book + indirect suffix of **vet**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **PRONOUNS** | - subject - always written<br>- object - differs from subject<br>- possessive (adj) - differs from the above<br>- appears before the noun | - subject - always written<br>- object - differs from subject<br>- suffixed to noun - shows person, vowel harmony, number and noun declension<br>- 12 types of suffixes |

Demonstratives: **ez** = this as = that If they modify a noun, **a** or **az** has to added. **Ez az autó szép** = This car is pretty.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **PLURALS** | - adds suffix s/es/ies<br>- has a few irregular forms | - adds suffix k + link vowel if needed |
| **TENSES** | - 3 forms of the verb, present, past, past part.<br>- tenses changed by + ed, or whole word, or use of to be / to have | - changed by suffixes<br>- verb stem + suffix to show person + number + tense<br>- suffix choice dependent on vowel harmony, therefore 2 types for each tense<br>- future = time word + stem |

Tenses have 2 forms: definite vs indefinite

Hungarian makes use of the Germanic system for the perfect tenses using the verb "to be" conjugated + verb

**TENSE NOTES**

Tenses have 2 forms: definite vs indefinite
Next, vowel harmony of back vs front vowels must be taken into account.
Next, the verb is conjugated by person/number.
The past tense has 3 categories of verb stems that depend on the ending of the stem and as well as the above.
EX: I went to the store = **A boltba mentem. men** = (went) verb stem, **n** shows category I **tem** = (I) person **mentem** = past , category I
Past = verb stem + suffix **t** + person endings.
The future tense uses **fog** + verb + suffixes for person

| | ENGLISH | HUNGARIAN |
|---|---|---|
| **COMMANDS** | - infinitive form of the verb | - verb stem + command suffix + person suffix<br>- will also depend on vowel harmony nad indefin. vs defin. verb form |
| **? FORM** | - question word/auxiliary verb<br>- verb + subject/question word | - **hová** = question word for verbs of motion<br>- **hol** = question word for other verbs<br>- intonation and punctuation |

Yes/no types of question are formed by intonation alone. In indirect questions the particle **-e** is used with intonation rising sharply on the second to last syllable and dropping off after the last syllable.
EX: **Nem tudom, fehérek-e a házak.** = I don't know if the houses are white.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **NEGATIVE FORM** | - use auxiliary verbs<br>- to be + not | - **nem** + verb<br>- **nincs** - used to negate<br>EX: *I have no money.*<br>- **ne** - for negative commands |
| **VERB/2ND VERB** | - verb + to + infinitive | - verb stem + present verb stem + suffix of person |

*I want to go = To go want(I).*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **FORMALITY LEVELS** | - 3 levels<br>- levels changed by use of modals and longer sentence structures | - 2 levels formal vs informal like French<br>- you formal = 3rd person singular of verb |
| **SWEARING/OATHS** | - involves the subjects of sex/bodily functions | - involves the subjects of religion and mother<br>- sex/bodily functions<br>- use of hand gestures |
| **VOCABULARY/ FOREIGN INFLUENCE** | - higher level of writing - Greek/Latin | - loan words from Turkic group, Persian from Caucasus area (before 900 CE) and Romance, Slavic and German later<br>- technical terms created by Hungarian lingusits for subject areas of technology, science and philosophy |
| **LEARNING OF WRITING/ READING** | - word recognition, phonics, syllables | - phonics, grammar rules |

## HOLIDAYS

- Revolution Day(March 15) – resistance to the Austrians

In 1848 Lajos Kossuth attempted to rid Hungary of the Hapsburg rule. Hungary won independence, abolished feudalism and established responsible government. On Russia's insistence, Austria invaded Hungary in 1849 ending this short lived independence.

- Árpád Day(April) – celebrated with dinner, dance and a recital
- Labour Day (May 1) – celebrated with folk dancing, along with choral singing practiced by peasant ensembles.
- Heroes' Day(last Sunday in May) – remembers those killed in the 1845,1956 and both world wars

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- St. Stephen's Day(August 20) – the beginning of the Hungarian Empire in 1,000 CE by St. Stephen.
- October 6 - 13 – Hungarian generals who were executed who took part in the 1848 revolution
- Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution (October 23), 1956

Being a predominately Christian country, the main religious holidays of Christmas and Easter are observed.

It is proud of its reputation as having the world's highest per capita rate of Nobel laureates.

## NAMES

Traditionally children are named after parents/ grandparents or lost family members. Turkish names are also found. Names of the great poets, writers and heroes are also popular.

Names are always written last + first.
EX: Zalai Ágnes

Women have used a variety of name-giving traditions. The older generation would be called by their husband's last name + his first name to show they are married.

### EXAMPLES

| Hungarian | English | Generation |
|---|---|---|
| Zalai Zoltánné | Mrs. Zoltan Zalai | older |
| Kozmáné, Zalai Ágnes | Mrs. Agnes Zalai-Kozma | younger |
| Kozmá Ágnes | Agnes Kozma | younger - seldom used |

If the woman is a professional such as a doctor or engineer, she would keep her original name.

Titles follow the name – **Szabó János úr** = *Szabo John Mr.*

Hungarian scholars also have excelled in the disciplines of linguistics (especially historical linguistics), historiography and literary history.

## EDUCATION

Schools were nationalized in Hungary in 1948. Since then, attendance in preschools and kindergartens is not mandatory, but most attend; schooling is compulsory from age 6 to 16 and includes an eight-year general education program. Education is free at all levels. Secondary education, both vocational training (involving about two-thirds of secondary students) and preparation for higher education, is universal. About one-fifth of 18 to 24 year olds are enrolled in a Hungarian post secondary institutions. Private and church-run schools have been re-established since the government ousted communism and started free elections. Education cuts put into place recently have threatened the existence of the preschool system.

Hungary has an international reputation for scholarship. It is proud of its reputation as having the world's highest per capita rate of Nobel laureates. Outstanding Hungarian-born scholars include the scientists John von Neumann, Leo Szilárd, Edward Teller, Eugene Wigner, and Albert Szent-Györgyi, the social scientist Karl Mannheim, the economist Karl Polanyi, and the philosopher and literary critic György Lukács. In addition, Pál Turán and Péter Erdös are among the world's most renowned mathematicians. Hungarian scholars also have excelled in the disciplines of linguistics (especially historical linguistics), historiography and literary history.

## ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE

Since its founding in the 11th century, the Kingdom of Hungary was a multi-ethnic country. Ethnic Hungarians are a mix of the Finno-Ugric Magyars and various assimilated Slavic, Turkish and Germanic peoples.

Due to the loss of lands more than nine-tenths of the population is ethnically Hungarian and speaks Hungarian as its mother tongue. About 3 percent of the population is Rom, 5 percent of which is made up of Slovaks, Romanians, Croats, Germans and others.

More than two-thirds of the people are Roman Catholic, one-fifth is Calvinist with smaller groups belonging to various Christian denominations. The Jewish community, which once constituted 5 percent of the population before World War II, represents less than 1 percent of the population since the Holocaust. The Nazi occupation of Hungary in the later years of the war took advantage of the anti Semitic sentiments that ran high. It was these Jews that Raoul Wallenberg of Sweden, the papal nuncio, and diplomats of Switzerland, Portugal, and even Spain desperately fought for. They were able to save tens of thousands. Despite their heroism, more than 550,000 of Hungary's nearly 750,000 Jews perished.

## LITERATURE/ARTS

Ferenc Kazinczy founded a movement of language reform and promoted literature through his high standard of literary criticism. A newly born literary language was cultivated by Mihály Csokonai Vitéz's rococo poetry and plays. Hungarian drama

was born with József Katona's tragedy *Bánk Bán*. The brothers Károly and Sándor Kisfaludy established the Hungarian novel. The first Hungarian language newspaper, Hazai Tudósítások, appeared in 1806. Other important 19th- and early 20th-century literary figures were the poets Sándor Petöfi, János Arany and Endre Ady. The literary and political contributions of Tibor Déry and István Örkény were particulary significant. Notable among the younger generation of writers that followed are Péter Nádás and Péter Eszterházy.

Hungarian music achieved worldwide renown with the composer Béla Bartók in the early 20th-century. He influenced future generations of Hungarian composers. Musical life and education in Hungary, including special schools where the method established by Zoltán Kodály is taught, are world wide. Many Hungarian musicians have gained international renown as performers, including the conductors Sir Georg Solti and Antal Dorati, the composer and pianist Franz Liszt and the pianists Annie Fischer, Zoltán Kocsis and András Schiff.

## CULTURAL LIFE

Hungary is the result of a diverse mix of Hungarian peasant culture and the cosmopolitan culture arising from an influential German and Jewish urban population. Both the coffeehouse (as meeting place for intellectuals) and "Gypsy" music also have had an impact. Cultural life traditionally has been highly political. Theatre, opera and literature have played crucial roles in developing the national consciousness. Poets and writers have become national heroes and statesmen.

## OTHER

Every day since the 16th century the church bells have rung 12 times at noon to commemorate the battle against the Ottoman Turks at Nándorfehérvár in which they won their independence.

The subway in Budapest was the first of its kind built before the 20th century, even before London's.

**Famous Hungarian-Torontonians**

Nicholas Hornyansky, Lajos Kay – artists; Drs. Janos and Paul Rekai, founders of Central Hospital; Dr. John C. Polanyi, Prof. Physical Chemistry, U of T, 1986 Nobel Prize Laureate; Gizella Witkowsky, ballerina

## RESOURCES

- The Canadian Hungarian Cultural Centre
  840 St. Clair Ave. W. M6C 1C1
  416-654-4926
- United Hungarian Fund
  747 St. Clair Ave. W. M6C 4A4

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# Project-based ESL instruction: An action research study

As a language teacher, I am always searching for more effective, efficient ways to help my students learn. This search recently led me to investigate project-based language teaching in my class through an action research study. Besides the description of the study and its results, readers may be interested from a practical perspective in the description of projects and how they can be adapted to different contexts (i.e., LINC); readers may also see this study as a workable example of how to do small-scale action research.

## Background

Last November, I had a problem with a new group of adult students in my intermediate level English-as-a-second-language (ESL) class: They seemed to have limited interest in learning English. They did not participate as much as my previous students had, they didn't do their homework, and they weren't following any of my suggestions for activities outside class, like listening to the radio, reading the newspaper, and going to the library. They also seemed unimpressed with many of the instructional activities that I had been bringing with hopes of motivating them.

Last November, I had a problem with a new group of adult students in my intermediate level English-as-a-second-language (ESL) class: They seemed to have limited interest in learning English.

In the middle of one class, I decided to try to find out what the problem was. I wrote the following discussion prompt on the board: "Tell me about your language learning experiences in your home country and in Canada." As the students enthusiastically shared their ideas about this, I learned that for each of them, English instruction had always been teacher-centred and characterized by translating texts, studying grammar rules, memorizing vocabulary, and doing the occasional information-exchange type activity. My style of teaching was more communicative and student-centred; the students were not used to this, and seemed therefore to feel that it was not the best way for them to learn. The result was a lack of enthusiasm and effort.

I understood the students' concerns; however, I was worried that their beliefs might have a negative effect on their language learning. First, I reasoned that although the students were used to a particular style of language teaching, that style had not helped any of them to reach more than an intermediate level of English proficiency (even though they had all studied English for at least seven years in their own countries before starting my class). So, I thought that being open to different ways of language teaching and learning might help the students to find ways to accelerate their learning and move beyond this level. Second, I thought that if the students did not take more control of their own language learning, they might not benefit from the rich learning environment outside our school. In their own countries, the students had had limited exposure to English outside their English classes, which perhaps made it easier for them to rely on their teachers. However, in Canada they would be immersed in the language 24 hours a day: There would be plenty of language learning opportunities for them to seize by themselves, as long as they were prepared to do so.

With these concerns in mind, I started looking for an instructional tool that might encourage the students to (a) see the value in different ways of language learning and (b) make a greater effort with and take more control of their own learning. After some reading and thinking, I decided to introduce my students to project work.

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## What is project-based ESL instruction?

As an instructional tool for ESL, projects are activities that have the following characteristics:

- They can be done in groups or individually.
- They involve setting clear goals (e.g., the deadline for the final product).
- They involve multiple steps (e.g., planning, research, and reporting).
- They are student-centred (i.e., the students will have to make many of the important decisions about the process and product of the project).
- They are content-based (i.e., they involve using English to learn about some substantive topic).

Having students make a town tourist brochure is an example of a project that has been successfully used in ESL classes in various contexts (Hearnden, 1998). Other ideas include having students create

newsletters, handbooks, or TV commercials, or prepare presentations or essays. In terms of timelines, project work can be completed in one class or extend over several weeks or months. The topics for projects can be determined by students' interests.

## Why do project-based ESL instruction?

Projects appear to be a worthwhile instructional tool for ESL learners because they help create a situation that is conducive to language learning. First, as they learn about the substantive topic of a project, students will be exposed to lots of English. This is valuable because exposure to language (or "input") is widely seen as a vital part of second language acquisition (e.g., Krashen, 1985). In addition, since understanding the material they work with is important in project work, the students will be encouraged to use strategies like asking for repetition or clarification to make sure they understand. This kind of negotiation is important to second language learning because it helps learners to understand input (e.g., Pica, 1994). Finally, project work has potential benefits for learner motivation. For example, students may feel a sense of challenge in working through the various steps of the project and understanding the material, and a sense of accomplishment in finishing the project and knowing that they understood the material. These factors can impact learner motivation, which has long been seen as crucial to second language acquisition (e.g., Gardner, 1985).

In addition, beyond the field of second language acquisition, the broader field of education is also supportive of project work as an instructional tool. For example, related to the idea of multiple intelligences (e.g., Gardner, 1983) (i.e. there are different, non-traditional ways of measuring intelligence, such as spatial, musical, and interpersonal intelligence), project work is beneficial because it can involve multiple, integrated activities that challenge students on different levels and in different ways (e.g., HPRTEC, 2001). Second, as classrooms become more diverse, flexible teaching tools like project work become more valuable because they allow teachers to address individual differences, such as age, gender, and ethnicity (e.g., Chard, 2000). Finally, if we acknowledge that what and how our students learn can still at times be a mystery, then project work can be attractive because it can ensure that students are at least exposed to a variety of learning opportunities (e.g., Ulmer, 2001).

## Trying project work in an ESL class

Having learned about what project work is and the benefits it might have for ESL learners, I planned to investigate some of its effects through a small-scale action research study with my class. The specific research questions, which grew out of my concerns with this particular group of students, were as follows:

1. Does project work help students to see the value in different ways of language learning?
2. Does project work encourage students to take more control of their own language learning?

The class consisted of four students (i.e., two Koreans, one Japanese, and one Turk). All four were visa students. (The school is a small, private English language school in Toronto. The student body is almost completely visa students.)

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As for procedures, the study involved three main parts:

- *Pre-project activity: A "top-ten" list.* I asked the class to generate a list of the top ten ways to learn English. They began by creating lists in pairs, then worked as a group to make one list. This took a total of about 30 minutes.
- *The project.* We began by working together to plan the projects. The students decided that the goal after two weeks would be to give a 20-minute oral presentation about a social issue relevant to Toronto, lead a 10-minute question and answer period, and hand in an 800-word essay about the topic. In addition, the presentations would be audio-taped so each student could have a recording of his/her presentation as part of his/her project portfolio. The project issues were homelessness, downtown traffic congestion, the Olympic bid, and AIDS. We discussed suitable research methods and agreed that time would be spent conducting research and processing information both in and out of the classroom.

  During the two-week period, our in-class work focused on language areas and functions that the students would need to do the project. I planned this instruction in different areas, such as target language (e.g., grammar, functions, vocabulary), research skills (e.g., transcribing, using the Internet), cross-cultural communication (e.g., interviewing, cultural values, body language), essay

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writing, and presentations (e.g., strategies, pronunciation, delivery of information). The students spent time out of class doing research for the projects. They interviewed different people (e.g., city officials, local residents), read authentic texts, watched videos and news reports, and searched the Internet.

At the end of the two weeks, the students each gave a 'practice' presentation on his/her topic and shared drafts of their essays with me and the other students. The following day, the students gave their final presentations and handed in their essays.

- *Post-project activity: A "top-ten" list.* As I had done before the project work, I asked the class to generate a list of the top ten ways to learn English. They began by creating lists in pairs, then worked as a group to make one list. This took a total of about 30 minutes. Once finished, we hung this list on the wall and then hung the list they had made two weeks earlier next to it. I asked the students to identify any similarities and/or differences on the lists and to explain their choices. I also asked the students to complete a written questionnaire evaluating their experiences with project work.

The results discussed in the next sections are based on the "top ten" lists the students generated before and after the project work, the students' evaluations, and my own observations of the process (recorded in a daily journal).

## Does project work help students to see the value in different ways of language learning?

There was a clear difference in the lists the students generated before and after the project work (see Table 1). Initially, when I asked the students to identify the top ten ways to improve their English, their list included items such as "studying grammar rules," "memorizing vocabulary," "practicing controlled language exercises," and "practicing dialogues," which seemed to reflect the kind of instruction that they were used to from their previous English learning experiences. After completing the project work, however, the top ten list included items such as "interviewing native English speakers," "transcribing authentic language," and "studying about a topic," and in general seemed to reflect a more communicative, student-centred kind of language learning.

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After completing the project work, however, the top ten list included items such as "interviewing native English speakers," "transcribing authentic language," and "studying about a topic."

### Table 1 – Top ten lists

| Before project work | After project work |
|---|---|
| • studying grammar rules | • interviewing native English speakers |
| • memorizing vocabulary | • transcribing authentic language |
| • practicing controlled language exercises | • reading authentic texts |
| • learning phrasal verbs | • learning vocabulary and idioms in context |
| • practicing dialogues | • giving presentations |
| • memorizing idioms | • writing essays |
| • practicing conversation | • listening to authentic conversations |
| • practicing functions | • talking to native English speakers |
| • listening to tapes | • studying about a topic |
| • reading texts | • learning grammar in context |

**Note**. The students were not asked to rank the items in these lists.

The student questionnaires also suggested a change in the students' beliefs as a result of having done the project work. All of the students had positive comments about the use of project work as a language instruction tool. For example, one of the Korean students commented, "I was skeptical at first because I had never learned English this way; however, now I can see that my English improved a lot because I was using it and learning about it in a real way every day. Also, I learned about several topics which are relevant to Toronto, so I feel more confident talking to native speakers."

## Does project work encourage students to take more control of their own language learning?

The students made more of an effort with and seemed to take more control of their own language learning through the project work. During the two-week project work period, I observed the students talking to each other enthusiastically in and out of class about their projects and staying after class for extra help with language and content. Two of the students in particular who had been quite reticent in previous classes started asking more questions (e.g., about the target language needed to do specific tasks) in class and volunteered to be the first presenters of the 'practice' presentations. I also saw examples of the students spending their free time working on their projects. In one case, I ran into one of the students at the library on a Saturday afternoon. He excitedly told me that he had just finished interviewing a doctor about the effects of AIDS on the human body, and couldn't wait to tell the class about everything he had learned. Furthermore, I was not the only person to note these changes in my students. Several teachers at my school were interviewed by my students for their projects and later commented on how engaged the students were during the interviews and how excited they were about their topics. This motivation was something the teachers had not seen in previous contact with these students.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this action research study suggest that project work in the ESL classroom can (a) help students to see the value in different ways of language learning, and (b) encourage students to make a greater effort with and take more control of their own language learning. The main implication of these findings is that if teachers find themselves facing a group of students similar to the group I was dealing with—uninterested in trying different ways of language learning, reliant on teacher direction, and lacking in motivation—then the introduction of project work into the instructional process may be one way to make positive changes.

In addition, the flexible nature of project work means that with consideration for students' needs and wants and a little creativity and careful planning, project work can be used effectively in many language learning situations. One important context that appears suitable is settlement ESL in Canada. Project work can be incorporated here based on the LINC Curriculum Guidelines (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 1997), which is used by ESL providers across the country for teaching English to new Canadians. Here are two examples of themes from the Guidelines and ways they can be developed into projects:

1. *Finding work*. The theme of employment can lead to the creation of a job search handbook. Students could research companies to find out who potential employers are in the city, and categorize them according to location and what they look for in potential employee candidates. The handbook could also include information about how to apply for a job and tips on writing resumes and cover letters and succeeding in a job interview. Students could compile information by interviewing potential employers, searching Internet job sites, reviewing employment advertisements in newspapers, and visiting employment centres. In this case, classroom instruction can revolve around skills and strategies for interviewing and being interviewed, taking notes, and writing resumes and cover letters. Additional work can involve vocabulary for employment and cross-cultural training for the workplace.
2. *Finding housing*. A project related to finding housing might involve the students in the creation of a thematic city map. Students could find out what it costs to live in each part of the city and how safe and convenient the different areas are. Information could be gathered from newspapers, the Internet, and interviews with police, landlords, city officials, and individuals living in the various neighbourhoods. In this case, classroom instruction can incorporate skills and strategies for reading newspapers, using the telephone, and writing letters and email messages to request information. In addition, vocabulary for housing

One of the Korean students commented, "I was skeptical at first because I had never learned English this way; however, now I can see that my English improved a lot because I was using it and learning about it in a real way every day. Also, I learned about several topics which are relevant to Toronto, so I feel more confident talking to native speakers."

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and structures for asking for advice can be outlined in class.

However, although the potential benefits of project work as well as its flexibility make it an appealing instructional tool, different contexts will likely mean different challenges for teachers and program designers who wish to incorporate project work. In my context, I had concerns with the following:

- *Class intake*. Continuous intake of students on a daily or weekly basis can make project work difficult to coordinate. This situation requires careful planning to ensure that all students are given an opportunity to contribute to the final project.
- *Difficulty*. Some students might find a particular project too challenging and simply copy information that they find. Besides raising questions about plagiarism, this may have a negative impact on language learning. The degree of challenge inherent in a project has to be appropriate to the particular students who will be doing it.
- *Classroom dynamics*. Some students might try to dominate during the research and/or reporting stages. This can impact the experience, and therefore the outcomes, for the other students. Consideration must be made for pairing or grouping students for project work as well as the way students will share information during the various stages.
- *Assessment*. Project work is a complex activity that involves the integration of various kinds of skills and knowledge and the development of different kinds of products. As a result, assessment is challenging. The students may naturally feel a sense of accomplishment just by completing the project, but they may want some feedback from the teacher.

In the end, however, the project work was a success with my class. It opened the students' eyes to a new kind of language learning, and showed them that they could take control of their learning. The work they produced was also something that they could be proud of. As a result, this is an instructional tool that I feel confident about continuing to use.

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*Ruby Macksoud teaches advanced English and TOEFL preparation to adult visa students in Toronto. Previously, she taught for several years in Japan.*

*Mark James, a doctoral student in the Second Language Education Program at U.T. co-authored this piece.*

# Board Members

### Karen Evans – Conference Chair

Karen has taught ESL to adults for the past eight years at a variety of levels for both the Toronto District and Durham District School Boards, and has also taken part in various special projects related to Canadian Language Benchmarks and placement assessment. In the past she taught in the elementary panel and also did volunteer work in the area of literacy.

She has served on the TESL Durham executive as secretary, president and affiliate director. Karen believes in the importance of professional development and will do her best to help the conference run smoothly.

### Joyce Ivison

Joyce Ivison has taught Adult ESL for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board for over twenty years. She has been active in TESL Ottawa as President, Affiliate Director, Conference Chair, Treasurer, and most recently Membership Secretary. She has an M.Ed. in Second Language Acquisition and has given workshops at TESL Ottawa and TESOL conferences. She is currently serving as Membership Secretary for TESL Ontario and for the past two years has been Volunteer Coordinator for the TESL Ontario Conference.

### Margaret Meyer – Membership Secretary

Margaret Meyer has been teaching ESL to adults in both Secondary credit and non-credit streams since 1990, also serving for almost as long as TESL Kingston's representative to the TESL Ontario Board. She has presented workshops at both local and provincial conferences. She was the Eastern Ontario coordinator for TESL Ontario in setting up the Kosovar Refugee Schools in the spring of 1999, and was a member of the ESL planning group for a Corrections Canada International Conference on Prison Literacy in May 2000. Her passions lie in the areas of teaching standards, student-centred curriculum, and refugee concerns.

# Membership Report

TESL Ontario has had an exciting year! Due to certification requirements, our membership continues to grow and now stands at 2,132. In November 2000 we passed an important milestone with membership reaching 2000. In recognition of this, we awarded our **2000th member, Murray McMaster, a year's free membership.**

Due to certification requirements, our membership continues to grow and now stands at 2,132.

The next deadline for certification is October 1. For those who have already been certified, it is important to remember that recertification in five years' time requires membership in TESL Ontario.

Joyce Ivison
Membership Secretary

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## Volunteers

## We need your help!

Volunteers are needed to assist at the TESL Ontario Conference, November 22-24, as door proctors, at the computer fair, or at the registration desk. The conference cannot proceed smoothly without your valuable assistance in these areas.

If you wish to volunteer for the conference, contact Joyce Ivison at joyceivi@aol.com.

If you wish to volunteer for the computer fair, contact Sharon Rajabi at shrajabi@home.com.

It is important to remember that in order to be a volunteer you must be registered at the conference.

Joyce Ivison
Volunteer Chair

# Susanna Moodie: One of Canada's First Immigrant Experiences

I took some time recently to read Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It In The Bush*. This book is a Canadian classic that I am ashamed to not have read earlier, especially considering the fact that I spent my teenage years living near Port Hope and Cobourg, Ontario, the scene of so much of Moodie's early life after her immigration to Canada from England on July 1, 1832. Little did the Moodies know at the time that July 1 would become the day when we all celebrate the birth of the great nation that they helped to form with every acre of land they cleared.

This is a relevant book for ESL instructors to have a look at. You might ask why a book that is speaking about a yet undeveloped Canada could be applicable to today's immigrant experience, especially when the Moodies had the benefit of the English language, education and social background.

Aha! Therein the rub! No matter what the language of the native country, it simply needs to be transferred 'once over' to another location and you have all manner of derivations. All ESL instructors are aware of the differences between British English and Canadian English. Ms. Moodie writes some very amusing dialogue about her Irish and Scottish 'helps' and some of the locals who came to investigate her cabin in the woods. There is a great dialogue describing Susanna's confusion over a conversation the locals had about 'milk.' They, in their patois, left the final sound off and Susanna decided they were discussing the 'mill.' Sound familiar? In another instance she was roundly scolded by a young American United Empire Loyalist who resented being addressed by Mrs. Moodie as "My good girl."

"Now don't go to call me gall and pass off your English airs on us. We are genuine Yankees and think ourselves as good – yes, a great deal better than you."

Language wasn't the real problem in Susanna Moodie's case, as it is with all of today's newcomers. Susanna lived in the Canada that was yet raw and wild. Her experiences included being chased by bears and scrambling over dead cedars in a swamp in below zero weather to visit friends who were starving to death. She dealt with astute poverty, which she felt had become her 'best teacher.' Although Susanna Strickland Moodie derived from a family of means in England, her privilege was not transferrable to her new land. ("Many a hard battle we had to fight with old prejudices and many proud swellings of the heart to subdue, before we could feel the least interest in the land of our adoption, or look upon it as our home.") This passage is reminiscent of ESL Adults who have had to relinguish their professionalism, their education, and their family backgrounds in order to forge a life here for their children where advancement is a possibility.

The real 'tug' for me in this novel was when I read of the wrenching of the emotions that is the true immigrant experience. Although inability to speak the language is a clear and pressing problem for newcomers, it really is the affairs of the heart that keep people depressed and miserable. There are many references alluding to her homesickness and her joy at seeing the harebells in the fields because they reminded her of home. In her sickness and the dire illnesses of her children, when she was alone in the cabin in the dark of a frozen night, she wanted nothing more than the comforts she had known in England at her family hearth. ("Many painful and conflicting emotions agitated my mind," says Susanna, as they moved from one log cab into another.)

This book is a good reminder that the human heart never changes, nor is it any different from culture to culture, regardless of social standing or educational level. We all need love and acceptance and someone who cares whether we survive or cave under. ESL instructors are often the first significant persons (and sometimes the only Canadians), who newcomers will become acquainted with. Our challenge is a big one, and it frequently has less to do with Past Participles and proper English Usage than it has with accepting human nature where it meets us.

*Judy Pollard Smith is an Adult ESL instructor for the Hamilton-Wentworth District Board of Education. She is a frequent contributor to the* ***Globe and Mail*** *and writes Book Reviews for the* ***Hamilton Spectator****. Her two ESL workbooks,* ***Fifteen Minute Time Fillers*** *(French and English editions) and Newspapers* ***in ESL*** *are available through Tralco Educational Publishers.*

You might ask why a book that is speaking about a yet undeveloped Canada could be applicable to today's immigrant experience, especially when the Moodies had the benefit of the English language, education and social background.

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# Paper or Computer? With songs anything goes!

In this presentation of last year's TESL Ontario conference, participants experienced mixed media for using popular songs in the ESL classroom. The presenter used several songs to demonstrate a variety of learning activities that can be done either on paper or on computer. In addition to vocabulary acquisition, the activities help students develop other language skills.

Songs can be chosen for thematic or linguistic reasons as well as to illustrate styles or eras in music.

## Context

The activities and software programs presented are used with college level low intermediate students in Montreal. Developing language courses around music is not new to language learning. Paper and pencil song activities have long been the staple of language teachers world wide. Who hasn't done a listening cloze activity with a class either to teach a grammar lesson, vocabulary or to start a discussion? Language teachers know the power of song to captivate and motivate students. Songs help students develop each of the four language skills. Students practice speaking and writing through discussions, debates and essays. More advanced students do research on thematic units involving music and literature.

Songs can be chosen for thematic or linguistic reasons as well as to illustrate styles or eras in music. I particularly like to include Canadian content and choose songs that might be unfamiliar to students.

I create lessons around songs for use in class or the language lab period. Even presentations seem less daunting if they involve music.

I create lessons around songs for use in class or the language lab period. No matter the venue, students enjoy the lessons and are eager to learn from them. They will listen to the songs over and over again and willingly do several paper-based activities. Even presentations seem less daunting if they involve music.

Recently I have had the opportunity to incorporate technology into the song-based lessons. For myself and for my students including some software programs has added to the language lessons.

## Paper-based activities

From one song, one can develop several activities at different levels of difficulty. For instance, students can write a research paper, an opinion essay, or simply answer short answers comprehension questions. Guided compositions are an alternative for lower level students or in cases where the teacher might want to control the direction of the essay. Other activities can focus on vocabulary, grammar, syntax and comprehension. Games can also be source material for songs. Bingo is but one example.

The three songs presented could lend themselves to a cloze exercise as well as the types of activities demonstrated. One song was used as a guided composition that included sentences with *make* and *do*. It also included a matching vocabulary exercise. The second song was a dictation activity and the third was a sentence formation activity.

## The computer based activities

The parallel activities demonstrated on computer included listening, reading, vocabulary, a dictation and an Internet quiz to test vocabulary. Students use the programs mainly in the language laboratory; however, the programs work equally well in the classroom, as a student project software or in the case of the Internet software, as homework.

Cantare is a software program designed to promote language learning through songs. The program allows teachers to build lessons for language learning around songs from a compact disc. To create a lesson, teachers choose a compact disc and create a file for the selected songs; type or copy/paste the lyrics and write accompanying notes; develop the dictionary; and synchronize the text of the lyrics with the song on the compact disc. With Cantare, you can easily change the language of the interface of the program to reflect the language taught or the first language of the students. The available languages are French, English, Spanish, German and Italian.

Students can listen to a song from a compact disc, read the lyrics on screen and access a dictionary and notes.

To run a lesson from the Cantare student module, students select a song on the compact disc and listen to the song and follow the words on the screen; they can click on a line to hear it; access the words and expressions in the dictionary; read the notes related to the song; and listen to the song without the lyrics.

Dialogues were used to demonstrate how one can develop a dictation from a song. Love Oh Love sung by Lionel Richie was cut into fourteen segments. The web software allows students to play the segment as many times as they want and they just have to type what they hear. Students get corrective feedback and they can ask for the correct answer.

You can access the dictation at the following URL. The segments of the dictation are MP3 files. If the dictation does not run, you will have to install an MP3 player on your computer.

http://web.cmaisonneuve.qc.ca/prof/lfroio/love/access.htm

NetQuiz, although not demonstrated, is also used to test comprehension of vocabulary and grammar points in the songs. The program has five different types of exercises with feedback options for each question type. The quizzes are easy to author and require no knowledge of programming. A simple command saves the quiz ready for delivery on the Internet.

All the software demonstrated runs on the Macintosh and IBM or compatible computers. For more information or feedback, please contact me at lfroio@cmaisonneuve.qc.ca, or call 514 – 254-7131 ext. 4553.

*Lydia Froio teaches at Collège de Maisonneuve, Montreal.*

The web software allows students to play the segment as many times as they want and they just have to type what they hear. Students get corrective feedback and they can ask for the correct answer.

## *NEWS*

### TESL Ontario Updates its Website

- ESL Ontario is pleased to offer the option of buying or renewing your membership online.
- Career ads and publishers' ads may also be purchased online.
- All credit card transactions are safe and secure – processed by Internet Secure.

Please visit the Membership section or Job Board section to take advantage of these options.

NetQuiz has five different types of exercises with feedback options for each question type.

# Dictionary for Microsoft Word

AutoShapes = AutoShapes allows you to insert shapes into your document. Click on the word AutoShapes at the bottom of your screen, choose a category, choose a shape, click on the screen where you want it and stretch the shape to the size that you want.

Bold = Bold means make darker so that the selected text stands out. (The icon is **B** on the toolbar)

Bullets = Bullets are used to make a list of items look good. The bullet icon on the tool bar gives you basic bullets but by clicking on format, bullets and numbering, and then selecting a different shape you can customize your bullets.

Centre = Centre is used to put text in the exact middle of the page. Highlight the text and then click on the centre icon on the toolbar.

ClipArt = ClipArt allows you to insert images into your document. Click on Insert, click on Picture, click on ClipArt and then choose the picture that you want, click on it and click on Insert.

Copy = Copy is used so that you don't have to type the same thing twice. Highlight the text, click on the copy icon on the toolbar, put the cursor where you want the copy to go and click on the paste icon.

Cursor = Cursor is the symbol that indicates where the mouse is. It is an "I" in the middle of the screen and an arrow when at the margins.

Cut = Cut allows you to get rid of text that you no longer want. Highlight the text and click on the scissors. You can also highlight and press the delete key.

Double-click = Double-clicking means clicking twice in rapid succession on the left mouse button. This is done when you want to highlight a single word or open a program icon.

Drag = Dragging is the process of clicking with the left mouse button on a shape (i.e. text box, clip art, autoshape or a double-clicked word), keeping your finger pressed down and pulling the shape to another location.

Enter = When you press enter, the computer believes that you have finished one section or paragraph. It will give you a new number or bullet in a list. Never press enter in the middle of a paragraph. The computer will go to the next line as you type.

Floppy Disk = This is portable storage. It is inserted into the A drive. Save your files on it so that you can open them on any computer.

Font = Font is the size and style of the letters used. The standard size is 12 and the standard style is Times New Roman but these can be changed using the toolbar.

Green Wavy Line = This indicates a grammatical mistake or punctuation error. To check the mistake, click on the right mouse button. If you like one of the corrections, click on it with the left mouse button.

Header and Footer = You can put your name and the date on each page that you type by clicking on View, clicking on Header and Footer, typing the information in the box and clicking Close.

Highlight = This means shadowing a word(s) with black so that the computer knows that you want to do something to it (them). To highlight a word (s), you can:
a) double-click on a single word. This is fastest.
b) click to the left of the words, keep your finger down on the left mouse button and drag the cursor across the word and then release when the text that you want is shadowed in black. This is best for a small section of text.
c) move the cursor to the left margin until it becomes an arrow and then click and drag down to select the text. This is best for a whole paragraph.

Icon = This is a picture symbol that allows you to command the computer to do something.

Insert = The insert option allows you to automatically insert the date, symbols, page numbers or pictures.

Italics = This means slanted to the side so that the selected text stands out. (Icon is ***I*** on the toolbar)

Margins = These are the areas to the top, bottom, left and right of the screen in which you do not type. You can change the margin by going to file, page set up and margin.

Numbered List = To make a numbered list, just type 1 and then a period and then press the Tab key

and then type your 1st sentence. If you decide to put numbers after you have typed sentences, highlight the sentences and click on the 1,2,3 icon on the toolbar.

Print Preview = To check what your page will look like before you print, click on the icon with the magnifying glass on the toolbar.

Red Wavy Line = This indicates a spelling mistake. To check the mistake, click on the right mouse button. If you like one of the corrections, click on it with the left mouse button. Note that all non-standard English words will have a red wavy line. You can add your name to the computer's dictionary if you like by clicking "Add".

Reveal Codes = If you want to see where you pressed space, enter and tab, you must click on the reveal code icon (a reverse P on the toolbar).

Save = To save the file that you are working on, click on the save icon on the toolbar (It looks like a floppy disk). If you are saving for the 1st time, you will see a box. Select the location that you want to save in and give the file a name. Click on save.

Shift = The shift key lets you use the top symbols on the keyboard. You must keep it down while you press the other key.

Soft Enter = If you press enter and shift simultaneously, you get a soft enter which means that you will not get a new number or bullet in a list.

Space Bar = The space bar should only ever be pushed once!! It's sole purpose is to separate one word from another. Do not use it to center or line up text!!

Tab = Tab is used to line up text. If you make a space using tab, then you can type another sentence and line text up at exactly the same spot.

Table = A table is a set of columns and rows. You can make a table by clicking on the table icon on the toolbar and selecting the number of rows and columns that you want.

Toolbar = This is a row of icons. The most common toolbars are usually automatically at the top of the screen.

Underline = This means underlining so that the selected text stands out (Icon is **U** on the toolbar)

Undo (back) Button = This button allows you to go back to what you did before. If you make a mistake, just click the undo button (a reverse arrow icon on the toolbar) and the computer will move back one step for each click.

Kathryn Brillinger

# My First Time

"Everything I need to know, I learned in kindergarten" ...

"You never forget your first kiss."

Early experiences can be powerful.

Well, I don't remember kindergarten very well and, sadly, my first kiss was unremarkable. In contrast, my first experience as a teacher in a classroom is burned into my mind and continues to resonate in my teaching today.

Flashback to over 25 years ago. A young university graduate with a degree in English literature, new in Toronto, I was trying to decide whether to take a Master's in Literature. "Forget an MA in Literature, everyone has one. ESL is a new field and you can make $9 an hour. There is a new program at U of T – you can get a certificate in TESL," advised a practical friend. I phoned a government agency and arranged to observe an ESL class. At 9:15 one morning (I had gotten lost – the class began at 9:00) I knocked on the door of a decrepit downtown building and poked my head in – "Excuse me... I'm here to observe a class." I was a little nervous and hoped to slip into a seat at the back of the class where I could observe and not be observed. I was then unaware of the fervour with which ESL teachers respond to native speakers entering their classrooms. Many years later, I know the feeling well – "Aha! A live one!"

The teacher called out to me, "STAY AT THE DOOR!" I did. This was the ensuing dialogue. (If this text could indicate body language, it would be shaking from still-remembered mortification.)

Teacher: "Class, this is Linda. She is a visitor to our class. What do we say???"

Class: (chorus) How do you DO!

Linda: Hi!

*Silence*

Teacher: No, no, NO! They said "How do you DO!" Repeat class.

Class: How do you DO!

Linda: (a little anxiously) Hello!

Teacher: (aghast) No, Linda. When someone says "How do you DO!" the correct response is "How do you DO!" Let's try again.

Class: How do you DO!

Linda: How do you DO!

The teacher nodded her approval.

I slunk to the back of the room.

From that vantage point, I saw that the class was composed mainly of men – and from the accents, mainly Italian men. The teacher (a wonderful teacher, it turned out) was very present, very lively. I had just started to breathe normally again after my failure in simple greetings, when the teacher said, "Linda, I have a dentist appointment – I was going to ask my students to join another class, but why don't you take them for the rest of the morning? Just work from the textbook exercises." I was horrified. I had never taught, knew nothing about ESL except that it related to English (and paid $9! an hour). She swept out of the room.

The textbook was Lado, I believe. The task: Read a sentence "John's hair is brown' and transform it into a question. "What colour is John's hair?" I sat in a chair at the desk and began methodically going around the class (in order). Nodding to the first person, I didn't know their names, Please read number one.

Student: John's hair is brown.

Linda: Ask the man beside you what colour John's hair is

Student: What colour John's hair is.

Linda: No no. What colour is John's hair?

Student: John's hair is brown.

And so on. It was like a Second City routine brought to life. Each time I inverted the question and, of course, each time the student repeated my inversion. Not only was I making the question instead of the student doing it, I was presenting the prompt in an embedded form. I didn't know how to get out of it, and so we proceeded like this for over an hour.

From time to time, one or more of the gentlemen would stand up and remain standing for a few minutes. I was startled but thought maybe it was a cultural thing that I didn't know about. I later learned that the students were from Workman's Compensation, and had all been injured on the job. Many had bad backs and could only sit for short periods of time.

At 11:30, the morning class was finally over and I left. I walked under the York street underpass to

Union Station in a daze. I had never failed at anything so miserably in my life. A classroom had always been a place of success for me (as a student). These men, unfailingly kind and respectful, had absolutely wasted their time during the few hours I had worked with them. I had been given an opportunity to do something useful and I had bombed. It would have been perfectly understandable if I never walked back into another ESL class in my life (but I did) and if the men never came back to their class (but they did). The next morning the centre called – could I supply teach for a week – a teacher was sick.

Thus began my diligent study of and pleasure in ESL pedagogy. Never again was I to walk into a classroom and think: "What will I get out of this?" but rather, "What will I give to this?" A summer course ESL Part I from the Ministry was about to start. Although I didn't have an Ontario Teaching Certificate, I begged my way into it and learned a great deal. I registered for the new U of T (Woodsworth College) TESL program and began that part time. I continued "PD-ing" for many years in TESL, in Education, in Intercultural Communications, and so on. I have, over the course of the subsequent 25 + years received an M.Ed. and am currently a PhD candidate in Second Language Education at OISE (still learning after all these years....)

The lessons I learned from that first morning are still sharp, however. What specifically did I learn that first time and pass along to teachers I train today?

1. (Re: How do you DO!) There are many ways to respond to salutations and other types of gambits. While there is value to learning frozen, formulaic patters, students need to anticipate a variety of responses.
2. There are many ways to keep students from embedding a question – from a simple "Jose, ask Paulo" (period) ... to a meaningful nod ... to the ideal situation where the individual has a reason for making a question beyond drill purposes.
3. Be prepared! I have never since walked into a class without being ready for almost any eventuality.
4. Students will forgive most things and will suffer through all sorts of clumsiness. I make sure I don't abuse that generosity and loyalty.
5. Physical (dis)comfort can have a strong effect on what happens in a class.
6. Know students' names from day one. If not, I have them write their names on a card so that I can personalize comments/questions.
7. Don't ask questions in order. Students count forward to the question they will be asked and worry about that question without hearing anything else that is going on.
8. Make good use of classroom visitors – but don't embarrass them!
9. Never stay with exercises for an hour! (I pale even thinking about it.)
10. Reconsider sitting at the desk when teaching. I stand, walk ... but I don't sit.
11. Never stop learning!

When a practicum session is difficult for one of our students, I share my first experience. Each time I tell the story, I shudder, I smile, and I marvel that I am still in ESL!

*Linda Steinman is TESL Coordinator at the English Language Institute, Seneca College in Toronto and a Ph.D. candidate in Second Language Education at OISE/University of Toronto.*

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**Meyers, Mary. *In Our Classrooms*. Toronto: Mainstreams Publications, 2001. 131 pages.**

Every educator will want to have a personal copy of *In Our Classrooms*. Meyers gives the reader a comprehensive overview of what English language learners require to become successful language and curriculum content learners. Even though Meyers concentrates on primary and junior grades, the text would be useful for LINC teachers as well as for all educators who have newcomers in their classrooms. More importantly, *In Our Classrooms* helps teachers distinguish between students who need ESL tutoring and those who may have cognitive deficiencies. A bibliography is provided.

For educators with an ESL background, this text is an easy read while offering practical ideas for the classroom. For those with limited or no ESL experience, the text is very easy to follow and to apply. While citing various theorists who have contributed to the field of ESL research, Meyers provides numerous practical "tips" in her book. She also provides blackline masters and checklists: the blackline masters are ready for classroom use and the checklists help teachers to consider all of the characteristics of the "ideal" classroom. *In Our Classrooms* is a must have for all educators simply because it can be applied to all students: ESL students, gifted students, students with special needs as well as "average" students will undoubtedly benefit from the strategies listed in this text.

Meyers identifies the lack of accountability for language training programs as the key reason why special language training classes for ESL students vary across the province. She goes on to make numerous recommendations for policy including the inclusion of ESL methodologies in Faculties of Education and the monitoring of all English language learners for at least four years.

While Meyers provides the reader with a superb overview of what it takes to be pedagogically sound, she does not talk about preparing educators to be sensitive and compassionate in their interactions with newcomers. For example, does the classroom teacher know what it feels like to be uprooted and placed in a foreign country? Does she know the stages of acculturation and how they may affect learning? Does she have any personal prejudices that need to be addressed? Meyers touches on these areas in various "Reflection" sections of the book, but an in-depth exploration of these topics is left to the discretion of the reader.

Overall, this is an essential resource, one that all boards of education will want to supply for their teachers, administration, support staff and volunteers. Perhaps provincial dollars would be better spent by providing staff members with a copy of *In Our Classrooms*.

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*Carrie Perkins, a graduate of Brock University and a former LINC Program Coordinator at Naylor-McLeod Group Limited in Guelph, recently graduated from the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario with a Bachelor of Education (Primary/Junior). She is currently "between careers" and plans to pursue a career teaching children.*

# Annual Report